



Stakeholder Perceptions of Prisoner Learning

by

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Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Faculty of Education

University of Tasmania

August 2018

Declaration of Originality

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The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

Abstract

This study focussed on prisoner learning within Tasmanian adult prisons. This thesis was undertaken to explore understandings and perceptions from various stakeholder groups in order to provide rich data from a range of perspectives. The major focus of this thesis was on both formal and informal learning and explored the issue of what prisoners reportedly learn from the lived experience of prison; from other prisoners, staff and service providers and seeks to understand and report stakeholders' views of what learning is 'valued'.

Stakeholders who participated in this case study ranged from those in relevant institutional positions, such as Police, Community Corrections Officers, through to formerly incarcerated persons, to employees of organisations who work with prisoners in education and support services, and related groups such as members of the legal profession and politicians. Participants were chosen through purposive and snowball sampling. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured questions using both telephone and face-to-face interviews of approximately one hour.

The data indicate that despite the difficulties, there are lives which are changed in positive ways; however, unfortunately for others the experience of prison is damaging, harmful and leads to increased anti-social behaviours. The experience of incarceration through the social, organisational, environmental, individual and learning systems all have a significant impact on what prisoners learn during incarceration. Often the skills required to survive the current prison regime work against prisoners leading pro-social lives once released. Ensuring prisoners spend their time engaged in pro-social activities, facilitating community interaction and

family contact, along with improving the social environment of prison are all important elements of supporting personal change.

This thesis will be of interest for those involved in prisoner rehabilitation and learning, policy makers and politicians, court authorities, and members of the community who wish to be informed of how those involved in this important activity perceive the present situation.

Dedication

For my son, Jayden

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the people who are in prison and those who have been imprisoned for their support for this project. This work would not have happened, if not for my family and their support. My son is currently incarcerated within the Tasmania Prison Service – and I feel that a part of me is also incarcerated with him, although not physically. I thank him for his courage to walk this journey with me, he has risked far more than I and has worn the consequences of my outspokenness.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor John Williamson and Professor Rob White, both incredible academics. Thank you for passing on your skills and knowledge, and for supporting me, even when things got controversial.

I would like to acknowledge the participants who gave their time to help increase my knowledge of our prisons. This work would not have been possible without their valuable insight.

Finally, I would like to thank all my friends and family for the support and courage that you have provided me through this journey.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On the whole, people tend to take prisons for granted. It is difficult to imagine life without them. At the same time, there is reluctance to face the realities hidden within them, a fear of thinking about what happens inside them. Thus, the prison is present in our lives and, at the same time, it is absent from our lives. (Davis, 2003, p. 15)

1.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to explore what prisoners learn, through both formal learning programs and informally, whilst they are incarcerated in prison in Tasmania. The purpose of this case study is to seek, from a range of stakeholders of the Tasmania Prison Service, their thoughts on the following research questions:

- What do stakeholders believe prisoners learn during their incarceration?
- What learning is valued by stakeholders?
- How can valued learning be enhanced?
- What do stakeholders believe are the benefits of valued learning?

The first chapter of this thesis outlines the context and background for the

research, focussing on a rights-based argument for prisoner learning and introduces the various ways in which stakeholders influence policy and practice. It provides a typology of prisoner learning and reviews the role of learning in a rehabilitative and punitive setting.

The second chapter deals with the literature relevant to educational, criminological and stakeholder theory and presents a model of prisoner learning, highlighting the literature on the place and space in which that learning occurs and the factors which influence prisoner learning.

Chapter three provides a discussion on the methodology of the research, a qualitative case study which uses narrative and own voice to tell the stories of respondents. This chapter discusses the ethical issues, limitations of the research and data gathering through the use of a snowballing technique.

Chapter four provides the background and context of the case study which seeks to place the reader in the context of the Tasmanian prison environment by analysing the stakeholders involved and the historical context of prisoner education. It guides the reader through a penological account of the Tasmanian prison system in recent years and highlights how policy has been practiced.

Chapters five to eight discuss the literature, findings and discussions related to the four research questions. Chapter nine provides a conclusion and recommendations for enhancing valued learning in the Tasmanian prison environment.

1.2 Background

Early concepts of prison included the notion of creating an environment which modelled a perfect society, designed to reform people by developing their natural goodness (Newbold, 2003). The delivery of education in prison historically focussed

on religion and was used as a way to assist prisoners achieve spiritual enlightenment by reflecting and repenting for their crimes (MacKenzie, 2006). In Australia, prison education was delivered by chaplains and focussed on young offenders (Department of Justice, 2002). This later developed into a focus on communication and literacy skills. By the 1930's education programs had become a cornerstone of correctional rehabilitation and there was a belief in the benefit of education for personal development (MacKenzie, 2006).

The quest to find a solution and 'what works' to the problem of responding to criminal activity has led to numerous strategies such as boot camps, weekend detention, drug courts, chain gangs and criminogenic programs, to name a few. Many have failed to provide the answer on a consistent basis and it has become increasingly "clear that there is no universal, generally applicable, recidivism-reducing formula" (Newbold, 2003, p, 151). However, of all interventions, it is adult education, in a wide variety of forms which holds the greatest promise (MacKenzie, 2006; Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders & Miles, 2013; Hall, 2015). In Australia, research shows that prisoners who gain greater vocational skills are less likely to re-offend, as are those who have completed educational programs successfully (Giles & Whale, 2016). This research explored Western Australia education and training data from 2005 to 2010 encompassing a total of 14,643 prisoners. The dataset provides both longitudinal and cross-sectional arrays of prisoner, study and welfare characteristics.

The empirical argument for providing pro-social learning opportunities to prisoners and the impact that this can have on reducing future offending is presented in Chapters 5 to 8 and is well documented in a number of meta-analyses which have been undertaken in the past few years (see for example, MacKenzie, 2006; Aos, Miller & Drake, 2006; Davis, et. al., 2013; Hall, 2015). The work of MacKenzie

(2006) is particularly thorough with each study being first assessed for scientific rigour and grouped into levels, eliminating studies with very weak methodology. A total of 284 studies were included with 42 studies being classified at the highest level of methodological strength.

Access to education is a basic human right and it is also vital to personal growth and development. Whilst the value of learning has been recognised by guidelines and international covenants, the right for people in prison to access education and learning opportunities is not formally recognised in legislation in Tasmania. Significant research shows that ‘education works’, including formal academic education and vocational education, in addition, some cognitive based criminogenic programs also work (MacKenzie, 2006; Davis, et. al., 2013; Hall, 2015). Davis et.al. (2013) found that, on average, prisoners who participated in prison education programs had 43 percent lower odds of recidivating (returning to prison) than prisoners who did not. “None of the programs focusing on punishment, deterrence, or control were found to reduce recidivism...Almost all of the effective programs focused on individual-level change...effective programs must focus on changing the individual” (MacKenzie, 2006, p. 334 - 335). Providing access to education, as a basic human right, reduces the risk of recidivism which, in turn, creates a safer community.

As a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966), Australia is bound by international law to ensure that the aim and purpose of the prison system is reformation and social rehabilitation and that “all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person” (Article 10). Similarly other instruments define a range of rights of people who are in prison, such as the Standard Minimum

Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (United Nations, 1955), the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (United Nations, 1990) and the Body of Principles for the Protection of All persons under Any Form of Detention or Punishment (United Nations, 1988), all of which set out a wide range of standards and principles.

These documents bear testimony to the principle that, while imprisonment may reduce crime by removing offenders from society, without rehabilitation and successful reintegration, community safety cannot be guaranteed. These documents enshrine prisoners' rights to education, rehabilitative programs, recreational and cultural activities, and meaningful remuneration for work. They also reinforce the concept that any treatment, service or program should be available to all people in prison equally and be of a similar standard to that which is available in the community (Tkachuk & Skinnider, 2005).

In regards to prisoners' rights to education, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) states that everyone has a right to education which should be focused on the development of the person. Further the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966) Article 10 states that the "essential aim" of the prison system is "reformation and social rehabilitation" of prisoners. The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (United Nations, 1955) states in Rule 58, "The purpose and justification of a sentence of imprisonment or a similar measure deprivative of liberty is ultimately to protect society against crime. This end can only be achieved if the period of imprisonment is used to ensure, so far as possible, that upon his return to society the offender is not only willing but able to lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life". Rule 65 states that the treatment of people in prison should "encourage their self-respect and develop their sense of responsibility" (United Nations, 1955, n.p.).

Facilitating personal change in prisoners leading to a reduction of further offending should be a principle aim of incarceration which may be fulfilled by the provision of pro-social learning opportunities.

In regards to education, Rules 77 and 78 require that further education is provided and where possible this is integrated into the educational system of the wider community. In the case of young and illiterate people in prison this education should be made compulsory “and special attention shall be paid to it by the administration” (United Nations, 1955, n.p.). This indicates that the delivery of prisoner education should be facilitated by the educational system operating within the community, through schools and higher education institutions.

In addition to education, “recreational and cultural activities shall be provided in all institutions for the benefit of the mental and physical health of prisoners” and physical and recreational training” (Rule 21) should also be provided. In addition, each institution should also have a library for the use of all prisoners “and prisoners should be encouraged to make full use of it” (Rule 40) (United Nations, 1955). The interactions with staff and the social environment of prison should provide encouragement to prisoners to motivate them to engage in a wide range of pro-social activities.

The Australian National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners’ and Offenders (2001) states that, “The right of offenders to access education whilst serving a custodial sentence is enshrined in United Nations principles and formed the basis of standard guidelines formally adopted by all Australian Correctional Ministers in 1989” (Australian National Training Authority, 2001, p. 1). Unfortunately, the reality is that these rights are often treated as privileges (Braggins & Talbot, 2003; Douglas, 2001; National Board of Employment Education

and Training, 1992) and are sometimes withdrawn from prisoners as a form of punishment (Scurrah, 2008). This would indicate that, in some prisons, the social environment and procedures of the prison do not encourage engagement in pro-social learning opportunities.

The Tasmanian Corrections Act 1997, the primary legislation for the operation of facilities managed by the Tasmanian Department of Justice, does not reinforce the right of people in prison to personal development, rehabilitation or education, however, it does state that leave may be granted for these reasons (Tasmanian Legislation Online, 2007). It is possible that this omission may contribute to the lack of focus and priority given to the delivery and resourcing of these types of services by the administration and permit a culture where these rights are viewed by some staff, as privileges.

The Revised Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2012), to which Tasmania is a party, provides an outline of what corrections organisations have stated that they aim to achieve. It is a document of intent rather than enforceable standards. The document (see Appendix A) outlines the requirements for rehabilitation programmes and education and the provision of sport and recreation to prisoners.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research follows on from an Honours project conducted in 2008 titled ‘Learning on the Inside in Risdon Prison’ (Scurrah, 2008) and undertakes a more in-depth case study on prisoner learning within the Tasmania Prison Service. It expands the previous research by gathering a larger source of documentary data and interviewing a wider range of prison stakeholders including police, legal

professionals, health professionals and Community Corrections staff. In addition, this research takes a wider view of learning which encompasses a greater range of pro-social learning opportunities rather than concentrating on formal learning opportunities provided by the prison.

Prisoners in Tasmania often come from disadvantaged families, have poor educational outcomes, poor health and poor employment histories (Department of Justice, 2009). In 2011 the Tasmanian Government outlined a strategy for corrections in Tasmania the '*Breaking the Cycle: A Strategic Plan for Tasmanian Corrections 2011-2020*' which was to herald a new way forward to reduce recidivism and improve prisoner outcomes. In 2017, only three of the 74 actions had been completed, two pertaining to further research and one relating to compulsory treatment of sex offenders (Department of Justice, 2017). Recidivism rates in Tasmania are currently the highest they have been since 2003 and are only slightly below the national average (see Table 4.1). Despite significant research which demonstrates that education has an impact on recidivism and post release employment (MacKenzie, 2006; Aos, Miller & Drake, 2006; Davis, et. al., 2013; Hall, 2015), there has been a significant decline in the participation of Tasmanian prisoners in education since 2003 (see Table 4.2).

This research will explore the perspectives of a range of stakeholders in regard to what prisoners learn whilst incarcerated in Tasmania. It explores the types of learning which are valued by stakeholders, how this learning can be enhanced and the benefits which providing these learning opportunities to prisoners will bring to individuals, families and the community.

1.4 Influences on Policy and Practice

A variety of stakeholders influence policy and practice in regard to prisoner education. A stakeholder is defined as a person who is involved with an organisation or community and therefore has responsibilities towards it and an interest in its success (Cambridge University Press, 2004). Overseas research (Applegate, Cullen & Fisher 1997; Cullen, Skovron & Scott 1990) tends to indicate public support for the education of people in prison, particularly young non-violent offenders. Krisberg and Marchionna (2006), who conducted 1,039 telephone interviews with voters in the United States, reported strong public support for non-violent offenders to be provided with rehabilitation services before and after release.

As part of the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes 2007, a report was produced by the Australian Institute of Criminology into Australians' perceptions for crime and justice (Roberts & Indermaur, 2009). The report, based on 8,133 surveys, revealed that the majority of Australians have little or no confidence in the prison system to rehabilitate people in prison (87.7 per cent), as a form of punishment (59.2 per cent), in deterring future offending (84.7 per cent) or in teaching prisoners' skills (63.8 per cent). This research highlights the perceptions of the broader Australian community in regards to the efficacy of prison as a place of rehabilitation. It is possible that the community views prison as 'not working'. The level of confidence that the community has, that the prison experience will effect personal change for prisoners, may affect policy and practice within and about prison systems in Australia. The following table outlines the results of research on the community's confidence in the Australian prison system.

Table 1.1

Confidence in Prison System (Roberts & Indermaur, 2009, p.20)

	Rehabilitate prisoners	Form of punishment	Deter future offending	Teach skills
A great deal of confidence	1.5	5.6	2.1	3.6
Quite a lot of confidence	10.8	35.2	13.2	32.6
Not very much confidence	66.6	44.8	59.8	51.9
None at all	21.1	14.4	24.9	11.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1.5 Types of Learning

Learning is defined as any activity through which knowledge or skill is acquired (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Learning involves change. It is concerned with the acquisition of habits, knowledge, and attitudes. It enables the individual to make both personal and social adjustments. Since the concept of change is inherent in the concept of learning, any change in behaviour implies that learning is taking place or has taken place (Crow & Crow, 1963, p.1).

In order to describe and classify the types of learning which prisoners may engage in, a continuum approach can display the range of opportunities.

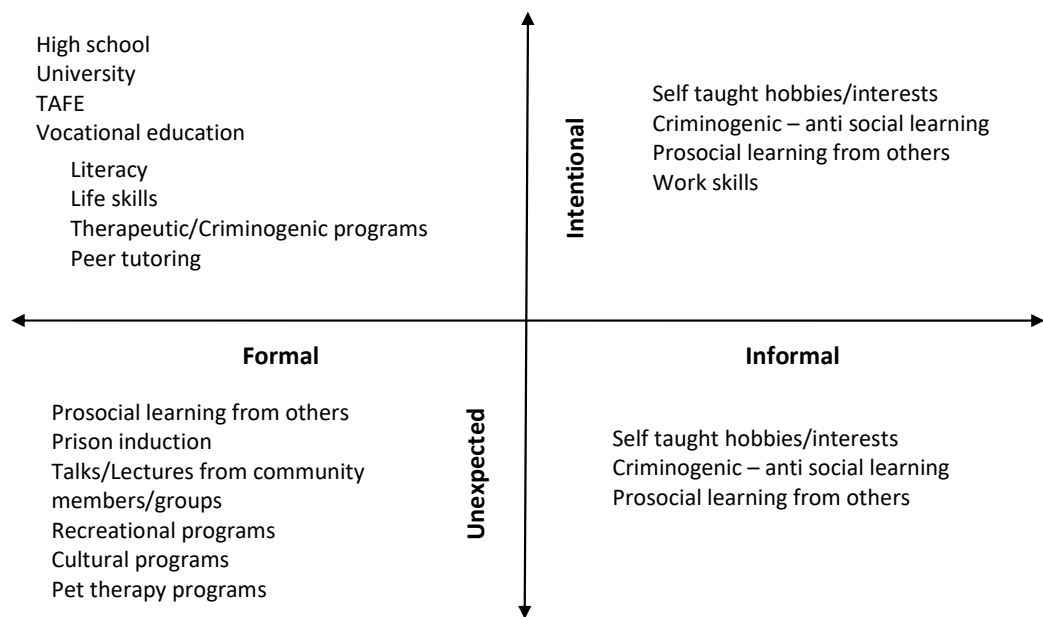


Figure 1.1. Typology of prisoner learning (Adapted from Connor, 1997).

This typology, whilst highlighting a range of formal and informal pro-social learning, does not ignore the possibility that some prisoners may use the prison experience to learn more about how to commit crime. Whilst this type of learning is likely to be undertaken outside of formal learning opportunities, there is potential to learn about offending during some criminogenic programs, particularly those involving group work and discussions about offending. These concepts are explored later in this chapter.

1.5.1 Formal Learning

Formal learning is learning which occurs as part of organised educational activities, including accredited learning offered through formal educational facilities, such as universities and Registered Training Organisations, such as TasTAFE.

Formal learning can also occur as an organised activity outside of formal educational facilities and for which the learner receives no formal educational qualification. This includes learning which has a formal structure such as

criminogenic programs, peer tutoring and other educational activities for which no educational qualification is awarded. These types of programs are typically formally structured and generally organised by prison management or community organisations. This type of learning may also be compulsory or unwanted.

Formal learning is approved and controlled by prison management, the criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs of prisoners' may be assessed by prison staff and may or may not reflect the needs and wants of prisoners. A detailed list of approved prisoner activities is included in Appendix B.

Boshier (2006) stated that adult education should be learner centred and negotiated in partnership with participants both in terms of delivery and in all aspects of design. Adult education meets a learner's individual needs and acknowledges the experience which adults bring to the learning environment. It should be provided by adults who have knowledge and expertise, in an environment which is conducive to adult learning. Adult education should also be available and undertaken as and when participants choose to learn. However, in some instances within a prison environment, learning is made compulsory, either for criminogenic programs or what stakeholders consider essential, such as literacy. This may affect learner motivation (Cross, 1981).

1.5.2 Informal Learning

Informal learning is any activity that involves learning outside of formal learning (Connor, 1997). Informal learning may be unstructured and unplanned. Intentional learning can be described as that which is planned and coordinated, while unexpected learning is unplanned by either the learner or the educational curriculum. Foley (1995) defines informal learning as that which occurs when people consciously try to learn through their experiences, whereas formal learning is distinguished by

curriculum, organised by professionals and occurring within an institutional setting. Informal learning occurs in a variety of places, involves a heterogeneous population and uses a wide variety of methods. It does not reflect the political and socio-legal frameworks of formal learning and therefore does not reflect the ‘narrowness’ of formal learning. It encompasses a diversity of arrangements, actors and practices. “It reflects subscribed, emergent and highly contextualised needs, rather than the ‘operational’ needs of formal education and training policy and practice” (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000, p. 4). It is not uncommon for participants engaged in informal learning, to not view themselves as learning (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000). Indeed, ‘learning is a difficult process to separate out from other day-to-day activities’ (Unwin, 2004).

Informal learning is embedded in daily activities and often taken-for-granted by learners (Livingstone, 1999). Informal learning may not be approved by prison authorities, is more likely to be controlled by the learner and is more likely to occur in informal social settings (Knowles, 1980). Informal learning is an under researched area probably due to its difficulty to measure and its grounding in experiential knowledge within social groups (Livingstone, 2001).

1.5.3 Collateral Learning and the Hidden Curriculum

Of course, not every type of learning fits neatly into a category, for example, teaching pro-social skills may be a planned effort by staff or it may be an unexpected occurrence between peers outside of any formal activity (Trotter, 1999). Unexpected informal learning may occur during the course of a formal learning program, for example, prisoners may learn through the ‘hidden curriculum’ (Giroux & Penna, 1983) or from peers during formal learning programs. The essence of the hidden

curriculum is the transmission of particular norms and values, usually those of the dominant culture, throughout the learning environment (Angus, 1986). “Values reflect fundamental commitments concerning what is worthwhile and best in life and as such underlie choices about how to behave” (Day & Ward, 2010, p. 289). The prison environment is laden with a wide range of values which may not always be pro-social and may instead support values which legitimate crime.

Dewey (1997) discusses the concept of collateral learning, indirect learning which occurs outside of the formal curriculum, which forms unconsciously and slowly as part of the educational environment and through interaction with the teacher. The messages transmitted through these forms of learning may affect the choices available to prisoners’, the learning climate and learner motivation. Indeed, Dewey (1997) states that it is the transmission of the attitudes and values through collateral learning that are more important in the personal development of an individual.

For us to understand the criminogenic effects of the prison and the role that it plays in increasing or controlling crime within our community, we may need to develop a deep awareness of the collateral and informal learning that is inherent in the lived experience of the prison.

1.6 The Role of Learning

Morin (1981) discusses the role of the prison as an education in itself, in the very act of imprisonment society is teaching along with punishing. Having moved from punishing the physical form, prison serves to “educate the soul”, indeed society “correctionally educates” the prisoner (p. 17). Harvey (2007) discusses the great deal of information people in prison need to learn in order to adapt to the prison

environment, socially, practically and psychologically. People in prison must learn to manage the distress caused by being imprisoned and adapt to the unique environment of prison.

In recent times, in the United Kingdom, there has been a narrowing perspective of prisoner education and training, with a focus on employability skills. This narrow focus does not provide for the diversity of needs of the prison population, nor does it necessarily provide for the learning needs of an individual as a whole (Warner, 2007). It is argued that for too long corrections workers

have been compelled to support a narrow form of rehabilitation; one focused on tackling the individual's problems and developing their capacities to live and to act differently...rehabilitation can take a person part of the way towards a better life, but if the route is blocked, for example, by the practical effects of a criminal record or by the stickiness of the criminal label and the refusal of the community to accept that someone has changed, then desistance may be quickly derailed (McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler & Maruna, 2012, p.10)

In addition, stereotyping learners and the education being offered to them should also be avoided, for example, offering beauty courses to women and construction courses to men (Coates, 2016).

Warner (2013) argues that there are a number of ways in which education provided to prisoners can be reduced in this way including an over-focus on employment, an over-focus on addressing offending behaviour and an over-focus on the measurable, that is, those aspects which can be easy to measure, neglecting aspects of personal development which is difficult to measure.

This narrowing perspective of prisoner education can also be seen in Tasmania, where there is a focus on rehabilitation, admission of offending behaviour

and criminogenic need, along with a focus on labour market skill development, which is apparent within the 'Breaking the Cycle' strategy (Department of Justice, 2009). This whole of Corrective Services strategy was developed with bipartisan support and after consultation with a range of stakeholders in 2011. The Strategic Plan identifies priority action items in the areas of rehabilitation and reintegration, infrastructure, sentencing options, integration with external service providers, community engagement, workforce development, training and support and oversight and governance. Since the release of the strategy there has been only one updated report on the implementation of the strategy and the results from the strategy, in 2017 where only three of the 74 action items have been completed (Department of Justice, 2017). Only one of these relate to prisoner learning.

The Australian Education Union's position is that prisoners' access to education should be guaranteed in legislation and priority given to "appropriate programs for young, Indigenous and marginalized inmates, and those with literacy and numeracy needs" (Packer, 2007, p. 33). The policy states that "education should include classroom subjects, adult basic and general education, accredited vocational education sensitive to trends in the labour market, distance education, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sports, social education, pre- and post-release programs" (Packer, 2007, p. 33). Here we see support for offering prisoners a wide range of pro-social learning opportunities throughout the prison experience.

Morin (1981) argued that prisoner education focused solely on cognitive deficiencies of people in prison and of skill development for vocational purposes are often commonly pursued purposes of education. However, they fail to address the person in a holistic way and focus on creating a "superficial imitation of 'good actions' and professional conduct" (p. 33) which is not sufficient in supporting human

development. He states, “education as human development means growth in the plurality and totality of one’s human dimensions” (p. 33). The focus of prisoner education should be on knowing oneself and that which gives meaning to life, which will largely determine the prisoners’ actions and behaviours (Morin, 1981).

There is evidence of a renewal of more holistic education, often seen in small pilot projects within Tasmania such as ‘Handmade with Pride’, community garden projects and ‘Pups in Prison’ (Graham & White, 2014). However, many of these programs may only be available to small numbers of participants and may not have funding to support them for extended periods.

Social integration and social regulation is one possible way of explaining why prison may become a force for change in a prisoner’s life. In prison, norms, rules and standards of behaviour, along with routine and ritualistic activities, integrate prisoners into the prison environment and serve to change a prisoner’s behaviour, both positively and negatively. Salah El (1992) states

Prisoners have no voice in decisions that affect their lives while incarcerated.

The prisoner is told what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and where to do it. Add in the schedules for eating, personal hygiene, court time, visits, recreation activities, sleeping and almost every hour of the day has been planned by the prison staff. Overall, no real responsibility is given to the prisoner. The major program in prison is to program the prisoner...In short, this sort of policy actually translates into the continual development of the underdevelopment of prisoners. (pp. 1-2)

“Being deprived of choice is in itself degrading and humiliating...it is also deeply dissatisfying” (Bauman, 2004, p. 59). Whilst it is important to maintain and

promote a safe social environment for prisoners, more could be done to allow choice for positive outcomes and lifestyles in many prisons (Liebling, 2004).

Prisoners are free to some extent to accept or reject what the prison has to offer or even what the regime tries to enforce, although the consequences of rejecting certain 'ways of being' can be severe, through further penal or therapeutic intervention (Bauman, 2004). Alternate opinions and world views when expressed by prisoners, no matter how well articulated, may not be rewarded and may indeed bring about further punishment (Bauman, 2004). Thus, it may be difficult for prisoners to grow and change in a punitive environment; at times the freedom of self-expression may be very limited due to the social constraints of a prison environment.

1.7 Rehabilitation and the Criminogenic Effects of Prison

One of the goals of sentencing is the rehabilitation of offenders. Rehabilitation focusses on changing the behaviours and attitudes of those who have committed a crime (Daly, 2003). It is an active process, which requires the participation of the person being rehabilitated in order to be effective. Ward & Maruna (2007) attest,

rehabilitation is a value-laden process and involves a variety of different types of value including prudential values (what is in the best interests of individual clients), ethical values (what is in the best interests of community), and epistemic or knowledge-related values (what are our best-practice models and methods). (p. 116).

Warner (2010) states that “‘rehabilitation’ is not just a matter of getting people to mend their ways in relation to crime, but an issue of personal development, often of a catching-up variety, recognising that social conditions are hugely influential and

must be addressed” (p. 3). Rehabilitation efforts, such as programs designed to address criminogenic needs, only reach a minority of prisoners and are more effective when delivered within the community (King, 2008). Indeed, Porporino (2010) argues that the focus on ‘evidence based’ corrections interventions may not be as evidence based as first thought, given both the weakness of clear impacts on recidivism and the lack of knowledge we have about why or what caused the changes in behaviour for those people who desist at the end of the intervention. Beckett (2006) argues that “science, for all its sophistication and power, cannot predict complex real-world phenomena...with any degree of accuracy because there are simply too many variables” (p. 186). The social environment of prison, coupled with a lack of opportunities to participate in rehabilitative endeavours, may not support individual pro-social change.

Sending an offender to prison renders them incapable of offending in the community and, as such, it has an incapacitation effect. However, a growing body of research argues that prisons have a criminogenic effect (Cullen, Jonson & Nagin, 2011; Gendreau, Goggin, Cullen, & Andrews, 2000; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Spohn & Holleran, 2002). It has been argued that this may be partly caused by social interaction with other prisoners and the learning of pro-criminal skills, attitudes and behaviours (Bayer, Pintoff & Pozen, 2003; Chen & Shapiro, 2007; Sutherland & Cressey, 1974).

Daoust (2008) highlights the potentially criminogenic effects of incarceration as falling into three categories: the effects of the prison experience itself; the post-incarceration consequences; and third-party effects.

The criminogenic effects of the prison experience include: prisons as ‘schools of crime’; the disturbance of family and community ties; the personal psychological

effects such as ‘prisonization’ and brutalisation; and the impact of imprisonment on mental health. ‘Prisonization’ refers to the process of accepting the culture and social life of prison society (Pritikin 2008; Daoust 2008; Blagg, 2008; Brown, 2010). Post-incarceration crime-producing effects such as labelling; the effects of losing skills whilst incarcerated; the effects of losing external contacts and supports which may create a greater reliance on criminal networks established during incarceration; reduced employment opportunities; and loss of social capital (Pritikin 2008; Daoust 2008; Blagg, 2008; Brown, 2010). Third-party effects include crime-producing effects on families of prisoners and their communities including the normalisation of the prison experience within certain communities (Pritikin 2008; Daoust 2008; Blagg, 2008; Brown, 2010).

It is possible that prisons foster learning in criminal skills, in fact, that they are ‘schools of crime’ (Abramsky, 2001). The prison environment allows for the transmission of learning about pro-criminal behaviours and for the formation of relationships between prisoners which may foster increased pro-criminal behaviours. Criminal associations, which include a mentoring type relationship in regards to the learning of criminal skills, are likely to increase criminal behaviour (Letkemann, 1973; McCarthy, 1996). Some criminal behaviours can be viewed as a type of work, are viewed as financially lucrative, and require the development of skills and networks (Letkemann, 1973). “Prison provides the time and opportunity to enhance already existing criminal skills” (Letkemann, 1973, p. 128). Indeed, prison and learning about crime through contact with others who pursue crime as work could be viewed as a ‘community of practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In their work, Lave and Wenger (1991) propose that learner identity is embedded in the context of their co-participating, where ‘learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the

lived-in world' (p. 35). Considering the interrelated themes proposed by Fuller and Unwin (2004) of participation, personal development and institutional arrangements, the prison environment situates and labels the learner as an offender and makes it difficult for the learner to avoid participating in pro-criminal learning. Fuller and Unwin (2018) discuss a restrictive – expansive continuum in regard to workplace learning, this model highlights the restrictive nature of the prison experience and the way in which it may limit personal development. The prison restricts prisoners' access to wider communities of practice outside of the prison, limits external learning opportunities and the extension of identity.

Imprisonment is unlikely to reduce the likelihood of further criminal behaviour (Gendreau, Goggin & Cullen, 1999) and may make some people more dangerous (White & Perrone, 2005). A criminal record can affect the possibility of gaining meaningful employment post release, which is an important factor in decreasing the risk of reoffending (Albright & Denq, 1996). The impact of deskilling, psychological harms and institutionalisation produced through the prison experience may outweigh the majority of rehabilitative efforts (King, 2008).

The philosophy informing penal policy has swung from 'nothing works' to 'prison works', to a purported 'rehabilitation revolution'; yet rates of reoffending by those released from prison remains stubbornly high, as successful resettlement remains an ever elusive goal. Without effective rehabilitative intervention, prison offers no long-term social remedy for reducing reoffending. A spell in prison can cost an individual their home, contact with their family, their job, and leave them entirely unable to break the pattern of offending behavior. (Bracken, 2001, p.4)

Goulding (2007) has raised this issue as follows, “Why does the State, in the name of the community, send those who break the laws to prison to become more socially deskilled, angrier, more brutalised and institutionalized” only to “release them back into the community...which is unwelcoming of them, has few common social values with them, and then wonders why they re-offend?” (p. 8) Indeed it could be argued that the community, when considering crime, should not only consider the fact that offenders may not have upheld their responsibility to their communities in committing crime, but also consider, whether or not the community has upheld their responsibilities to the offender (Schissel & Brooks, 2002).

Compounding the criminogenic effects of the prison experience are the problems associated with re-entry into the community. Post release support for prisoners is crucial to assisting them to reintegrate successfully into society. Not only must programs be made available after release, they should commence before release, and be targeted on a broad range of social and material issues faced by the newly released prisoner, including those related to criminogenic need (Ross, 2005). As discussed previously (Packer, 2007), learning needs to be supported throughout the prison experience and post release.

1.8 Moral Dimensions of Learning

Learning is a natural human process, learning is not characterized as being anti- or pro-social in itself, however, the outcomes of learning have moral, cultural and social consequences (Jarvis, Holford, & Griffin, 2003). The moral context of learning is influenced by the attitudes, values and behaviours of the surrounding social environment (Garratt, 2000).

There is no good or bad knowledge, even skills which are valued for their application to criminal activities are not inherently bad and may be transferable to pro-social applications. For example, the learning of chemistry can lead to pro-social endeavours such as employment, but may also be used for anti-social endeavours such as bomb making. So, whilst the knowledge gained through education and training may be applied in a pro-social manner there is also potential for it to be applied to facilitate anti-social activities.

When discussing learning, we are not only considering what is learned but also how it is learned. Education is often considered a planned process of learning and there are a wide range of approaches to the education of adults (Rogers, 1986). Formal adult education relates to “those forms of education that treat the student participants as adults – capable, experienced, responsible, mature and balanced people [where teachers] respect and enhance the adulthood [of learners]” (p. 17).

Boshier (2006) argues that “learning needs to be valued for its specific contribution to the life of each citizen and to our learning society” (pp. 4-5) and that governments should develop policy and practices which acknowledge the advantages of adult learning such as enhanced social inclusion, self-esteem, community development and active citizenship. Additionally, policy and practices should acknowledge the diversity of learning needs. Prisoners are not a homogenous group but come from all walks of life and differ in the same ways that members of the community differ, as such, their learning needs and desires also differ (Pearce, 2007).

Learning is not limited to education or training, nor is it limited by a particular context or life stage (Boshier, 2006). Learning is an individual process of change, as individuals develop their potential it may challenge the existing status quo of the culture and social environment. Learning can therefore develop a political dimension

(Jarvis et. al., 2003). Behan (2007) suggests that teachers in prison “should encourage our students to imagine a different world, for themselves, their families, their communities and encourage them to play a part in that new world.” (p. 165). Encouraging prisoners to imagine a life without crime and supporting them to undertake a wide range of pro-social learning opportunities may assist them to reduce offending and create a safer community.

1.9 Prisoners and Personal Development

Development can be understood “as a process of qualitative change in attitudes, values and understandings that adults experience as a result of ongoing transactions with the social environment, occurring over time, but not strictly as a result of time.” (Taylor, Marienau & Fiddler, 2000, p. 10) It is the social environment which shapes how people learn, what they learn and therefore the course of their development (Taylor, Marienau & Fiddler, 2000). As such, the social environment of the prison may be a significant factor in engagement and motivation of prisoners and the efficacy of pro-social learning opportunities.

Learner choice and motivation are important factors to consider, especially when learning is focused on changing behaviour. Enforcing change through compliance is less likely to create long term transformation as learning cannot be produced on demand (Kelman, 1958; Taylor, Marienau & Fiddler, 2000).

Fenner (1999) argues that the transmission of values is unavoidable in any educational setting, teachers understand that what is said and done in a learning environment will impact on others. In a prison setting, the value of pro-social modeling is well recognized as a methodology for those working in a therapeutic capacity. Pro-social modeling has been described as the process used when a person

“acts as a good motivating role model in order to bring out the best in people” (Cherry, 2005, p.2) and is underpinned by the understanding that everyone has the ability to change (Cherry, 2005). It is a highly value laden approach which “involves workers identifying and being clear about the values they wish to promote and purposely encouraging those values through the use of praise and other rewards” (Trotter, 1999, p. 19). The impact of staff as a whole, not just educators, may have a deep effect on prisoners. “A hostile, superior, contemptuous or dismissive attitude on the part of a staff member constitutes an attack on the prisoner’s self-esteem and inspires resentment both against the staff member and against the values and standards which he symbolizes” (Hawkins, 1976, p. 92). This seems to indicate that the behaviour of staff and the organisational culture in which they work will influence prisoners’ motivation to engage in pro-social learning and their ability to change and develop as people.

Learning is essential for people to be able to function in our society, it is how life changes are created (Bauman 2004, Jamrozik, 2009). Learning is essential to enable prisoners to learn pro-social skills and engage in personal change. However, “education in Australia is perhaps the most unequally distributed social resource” (Jamrozik, 2009, p.117), for example, through gender, social class and economic status. The cumulative effect of these variables may influence the educational opportunities available to prisoners, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

1.10 Summary

Education is a basic human right enshrined by international laws and national standards and should, therefore, be as accessible to prisoners as to any other person in

our community. The reality is that education, educational resources, and pro social opportunities are controlled and limited within the prison environment. The prison environment itself creates a difficult learning environment and prisoners may be exposed to greater opportunities to pursue or be exposed to anti-social skills. There is, however, increasing research that education ‘works’ and that personal development and support can assist prisoners to lead productive lives after their release.

This thesis seeks to explore the perceptions of stakeholders regarding what prisoners learn during their incarceration. This includes exploring the ‘hidden curriculum’ of messages that stakeholders receive as they interact with the prison system, the learning which occurs from experiencing the prison environment and culture, and the learning which is ‘approved’ and offered formally to prisoners through traditional formal education and through ‘criminogenic’ and psychological approaches to rehabilitation practices.

Given that one of the goals of sentencing is rehabilitation, the result should be desistance from crime. Desistance theories, particularly agency and social identity, are relevant to understanding the impacts of pro-social learning. The next chapter commences with a discussion of a variety of criminology and education theories, providing some theoretical foundations which support the concept of pro-social learning in prison.

Chapter 2

Literature review: Theories influencing prisoner learning

“Doing time is definitely something that has to be learned.” (James, 2003, p. 199)

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will focus on exploring the theories, in both education and criminology, which relate to the concept of prisoner learning. It will also explore research which reflects stakeholders’ perceptions of what prisoners learn whilst they are incarcerated. Following chapters address the literature which relates to each of the individual research questions along with the findings and discussion of the research.

The concept of prisoner learning brings together criminology and education theories. Prison is a unique physical and social space and the learner cohort, whilst varied, have experienced the criminal justice system as an ‘offender’. The first part of

this literature review will explore some of the theories which have shaped this research.

The learning which occurs within a prison environment is influenced by a range of stakeholders. The availability, range and resources which enable prisoners to learn during their incarceration is influenced by policy and practice within the institution, community perceptions, the political environment, the media and a range of organisations within the community. Prisoner learning is also linked to the effectiveness of the prison service and their goals of rehabilitation and reintegration.

This chapter will review the concept of stakeholder and the literature on stakeholder theory, in this section a model of prisoner learning is presented to highlight the interconnections between stakeholders and prisoner learning. The following chapters focus on the research questions, they explore the literature related to the research question in more depth and include findings and discussion.

A wide range of electronic databases were searched including education and criminology databases and journals stored within EBSC, Proquest, Informit, Google Scholar, SAGE journals, Scopus and ERIC journal databases.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

The following section will discuss a range of criminology and education theories which each provide a lens through which to understand the lived experience of learning in prison. No one theory can fully explain the prisoner learning experience; however, more recently a general theory of prisoner education has been proposed. This general theory, whilst still in its infancy is discussed and drawn upon throughout this thesis.

2.2.1 Critical Criminology

Critical criminology, in a similar way to conflict theories, views crime as being connected to the inequality of power in society. Critical criminology goes further than conflict theories in that it is “associated with political agendas that involve deep and fundamental social change” (Vold, Bernard & Snipes, 1998, p. 260). Critical criminologists “have tended to share an opposition to the kind of criminology that takes so much of the status quo for granted” (Carrington & Hogg, 2002, p.2). From an education standpoint, the theory of radical adult education, with its focus on social change and Marxist perspective is closely aligned to the critical criminology perspective (Holst, 2002).

Brown (2002) discusses the involvement in social movements which create change in the justice system, in this sense, critical criminology is not confined to theory, but more oriented to action, alliance building and political change. It is this desire for change which forms the key motivator in this research project. In addition, the focus of alliance building links closely with the stakeholder perspective which is central to this thesis.

2.2.2 Convict Criminology

Convict criminology is “rooted in the experience of its practitioners - current prison inmates and former prisoners - now working as criminal justice researchers and (primarily) as critical criminologists. Convict criminology lays claim to knowledge unknown to those who lack similar life experiences” (Mobley, 2009, p.67-68). It is the voice of the insider, whilst led by former prisoners, also seeks to include academics who wish to illustrate the experiences of prisoners. Convict criminology merges two traditions - critical criminology and qualitative/ethnographic methods

(Jones, Ross, Richards & Murphy, 2009). This research has sought to use own voice to highlight the knowledge that prisoners possess about the effects of prison and the ways in which learning can enhance the lives of prisoners and the prison environment.

“In an environment frequently described as dangerous, overcrowded and destructive, many prisoners have cited voluntary participation in education programs...as the only positive experience one may encounter while incarcerated” (Piche, 2008, p. 4). The learning journey should be encouraged rather than forced on prisoners, in order for them to get “the greatest benefit” which “is found in the liberation of the mind whereby one feels released from limited thinking and possibilities, opening the way to new visions and methods of getting by in this modern, fast-paced world” (Carter, 2008, p. 69). This research draws on convict criminology through the methodology of own voice and expressing the views of stakeholders who have experienced prison.

2.2.3 Labelling Theory

Labelling theorists (e.g., Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1967; Schur, 1971) propose that the incarceration of offenders is the strongest form of condemnation by society and the labelling perspective forms part of the claim for prison being a learning environment for criminal activity (Williams, 2008). The labelling process, whereby a person moves from having a non-deviant self-image to a criminal self-image, may not be entirely the fault of the criminal justice system or other authority figures; some people may actively seek to acquire a criminal self-image. However, official labelling may make it more difficult to change that self-image (Vold, Bernard & Snipes, 1998). Prison education provides prisoners with an alternate self-image, that of learner or student, which, according to prisoners and practitioners can assist in the formation of

a new personal narrative (Prisoner Learning Alliance, 2016). Similarly, activities such as theatre engage with prisoners on an imaginative level which may lead prisoners to create a new self-identity (Davey, Day & Balfour, 2015). Labelling theory is important to understanding what prisoners learn during incarceration, as an ‘inmate’ and ‘offender’. Prisoners are continually reminded that their identity, both within prison and in the eyes of the wider community, is constantly tied to their crime and their past life as a criminal. Labelling may prevent them from moving forward and reimagining their lives as productive members of the community.

2.2.4 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory highlights the role that the social environment plays in determining learning and behaviour. Through a combination of behavioural and cognitive philosophies, Bandura (1977) formed his theory of modelling and self-regulation. Self-regulation occurs when people compare their behaviour with that of others and the standards set by society. A person’s beliefs, expectations and cognitive competencies are developed and modified by social influences. These social influences relay information and activate emotions and behaviour through modelling and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986). Ackers (1992) explains that social learning theory provides the link between social structural conditions and individual behaviours. This has been described as,

ideas and beliefs – including “definitions” of behaviour, expectations about how to behave in particular situations, social approval or valuation of certain behaviours, and social responses that back up those expected and approved behaviours with rewards and punishments – have a direct causal impact on behaviour (Vold, Bernard & Snipes, 1998, p.200)

In regards to prisoner learning and the impact of the prison environment, social learning theory assists to explain the enculturation process of being a prisoner and how the skills and behaviours learned in prison may have a negative effect on people's ability to reintegrate into society. It highlights how prisons can be 'schools of crime'.

2.2.5 Desistance Theory

Desistance theory merges a wide range of criminological theories, including labelling and social learning theory, in an endeavour to understand why people desist from crime. Learning from peers, a cornerstone of social learning theory, is relevant to desistance theory in the particular focus on how individuals spend their time (Rocque, 2017). Pro-social learning and activities become paramount when we consider that "when people have nothing constructive to do with their time, the lure of antisocial behaviour may become too much" (Rocque, 2017, p. 147), particularly when surrounded by peers who may continue to pursue a criminal career and mindset within the prison. Likewise, activities which focus on civic participation and involve giving back to the community through socially constructive activities "may therefore represent affirmation of the exiting of a criminal career both for the offender and to the wider society" (Rocque, 2017, p. 148).

Desistance theory also highlights that the prison environment brings the prisoner into association with others with an offending background and makes it difficult to maintain social and family bonds. It puts the prisoner's life 'on hold' rather than encouraging maturation. In addition, the identities and narratives of prison reinforce a prisoner's criminal identity through terminology and processes (McNeill et. al., 2012).

In these ways, desistance theory, can contribute to our understanding of informal learning within the prison environment and the importance of offering opportunities to engage in valued learning.

2.2.6 Andragogy

Theories of learning were historically been based on the study of animals and on children, largely ignoring adult learning. Knowles (1980) proposed some basic tenets which highlight the difference between children and adult learning. A person, as they mature, develops a self-concept which is no longer dependent, but self-directing. People accumulate a wide range of experiences which become a resource for learning and their readiness to learn focusses more on the development of social roles. The application of knowledge is required more immediately and becomes increasing problem centred. In addition, the adult learner may resist learning in situations where they do not feel valued as an adult, for example,

adults have a need to be treated with respect, to make their own decisions, to be seen as unique human beings. They tend to avoid, resist, and resent situations in which they feel they are treated like children – being told what to do and what not to do, being talked down to, embarrassed, punished, judged. Adults tend to resist learning under conditions that are incongruent with their self-concept as autonomous individuals (Knowles, 1970, p.56).

As this passage highlights, the prison environment is one in which prisoners are often ‘treated like children’ and not like autonomous individuals. In addition, within the prison, they are often forced or expected to, complete criminogenic programs (sometimes repeatedly) which hold little interest to them. Prison learning experiences such as this may be pro-social but not based on adult education

principles. Of course, if the power to punish is strong enough, a person will participate in the learning, they may even learn, but it is less likely that their behaviour will change as a result of that learning. Adults are more deeply motivated to learn those things that they believe that have a need to learn. Adult learners need to be engaged in the process of deciding what and how to learn, “a basic element in the technology of andragogy is the involvement of the learners in the process of planning their own learning, with the teacher serving as a procedural guide and content resource” (p.59).

For prisoners with poor educational histories and those of exclusion from school due to behavioural issues, coming to adult education where “they are treated with respect, are involved in mutual inquiry with the teacher, and are given responsibility for their own learning” (Knowles, 1970, p.57) can be an entirely surprising and very rewarding experience. Knowles (1970) discusses the psychological climate of an adult learning environment where an adult learner can “feel accepted, respected, and supported...in which there is freedom of expression without fear of punishment or ridicule” (p.58). This results in the education space becoming an ‘oasis’ within the prison environment (Crewe, Warr, Bennett & Smith 2013; Ruess, 1997), a place for a prisoner to be a self-directed adult.

Adult learning theories contribute to our understanding of prisoner learning by highlighting the importance of choice and being able to engage as an adult, rather than as an offender, in their own individual learning journey.

2.2.7 General Theory of Prison Education

Employing a broad view of prison education, the recent research paper by Szfris, Fox & Bradbury (2018), proposes an overall general theory of prison

education using a realist review method. They propose three context-mechanism-outcome configurations grounded in prison sociology and desistance theory based on 'hook', 'safe space' and 'qualifications'. In light of the research which they have reviewed they make the following three propositions:

In prison education, learners can be exposed to different ways of thinking and alternative lifestyle choices. This can serve to develop meaningful concepts of a possible future self with education acting as a 'hook' into new ways of being and encourages new identities. This relates to the process of engaging in educational activity (p. 51).

Education provides qualifications and skills that serve to externally validate newly formed identities within an individual. Such external validation serves to improve a person's belief that they are able to successfully pursue a new identity. This relates to the outcomes of engaging in educational activity (p.56).

Education can, under the right circumstances, and with careful facilitation by appropriate staff, cultivate an environment for the development of positive pro-social identities. When achieved, this promotes an identity that is focused on growth and development as opposed to preoccupied with survival (p. 57).

The propositions which are outlined in this research paper, whilst still in their infancy, provide a framework for understanding the concept of prisoners' learning which will assist both policy and practice. However, there is not sufficient detail in these propositions to understand the 'how' of prisoner learning. The next section of this literature review will focus on the how by looking to stakeholder and network theory. This section of the thesis helps the reader to gain a greater understanding of the proposed model of prisoner learning.

2.3 Stakeholders, Networks and Prisoner Learning

Stakeholder theory allows us to view prisoner learning as being influenced by a range of organisations, groups and individuals, it is also useful in highlighting the expectations and roles of various stakeholders in relation to prisoner learning.

Stakeholder theory recognises that the general public, and others with a ‘stake’ in the workings of the organisation, have a key interest in the affairs of organisations (Abrams, 2008). As citizens in a democratic society, individuals have a duty to ensure social responsibility and accountability of organisations, both private and public (Giroux, 2009). Giddens (1991) argues that organisations are affected by the rapid pace of social change and are required to measure, improve and even reinvent themselves. This environment in turn leads to the need for rapid and profound organisational change.

Taking a wide view of stakeholders is important and should include groups that are perceived as both friendly and hostile to the organisation (Freeman & Reed, 2008). Community engagement has an increasingly important role in the management of government agencies. In 2013 the Tasmanian government released a policy platform for community engagement titled ‘Tasmanian Government Framework for Community Engagement’ (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2013), along with a range of other documents including ‘Tasmanian Government Approach to Collaboration’, the ‘Tasmanian Government Communications Policy’ and the ‘Tasmanian Government Project Management Guideline’. This research uses this documentary data to understand the ways in which the Tasmanian Government attempts to engage with stakeholders at a formal policy level. Stakeholders are ‘chosen’ based on approvals of their legitimacy, particularly those who are public

servants themselves (and therefore bound by the Public Service Act not to speak out against the Departments for which they work) or those who are recipients of Government funding, radical and fringe stakeholders are more likely to be excluded from consultations. The process of engaging with stakeholders may contribute to organisational success and wellbeing, for example, Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky (2006) argue that key values for organisational well-being include transparency, accountability, collaboration, responsiveness to common ground, democratic participation and respect for human diversity. Radical transparency has been described as ‘the complete and truthful disclosure of an organization’s plans and activities’ (Hart & Sharma, 2004, p. 8), however, it may be inadequate if that transparency only concentrates on that which has already been decided or implemented.

Organisations need to ‘systematically identify, explore, and integrate the views of those on the periphery or at the “fringe”— the poor, weak, isolated, non-legitimate, disinterested, and even non-human’ (Hart & Sharma, 2004, p. 8). To enable learning from these fringe stakeholders’ it is essential that managers work to establish positive relationships ‘so that intense informal conversations can begin. The transfer of tacit or unwritten knowledge residing in people and their traditions requires intense interaction; it cannot be transferred in large group meetings or during formal negotiations’ (Hart & Sharma, 2004, p. 14). It is also vital that managers ‘empathize with differences in perspectives. Empathy depends upon deep listening and complex interactions with those possessing divergent perspectives’ (Hart & Sharma, 2004, p.14).

Organisations are not autonomous but connected to stakeholders and the wider community and rather than viewing stakeholders as requiring control, they require

collaboration and inclusion. In regards to Corrections organisations, the Australian Standard Guidelines for Corrections (2014) acknowledges the important role of stakeholders and wider community involvement. It states “The effectiveness of the correctional system is improved through openness and transparency of operations. Community stakeholders should be directly involved in the delivery of correctional services and be encouraged to visit prisons.” (p. 34)

Stakeholder groups comprise subgroups and individuals who may have both multiple roles and a variety of interests, therefore, conflict, often stemming from divergent interests, may be more complex due to the multiplicity of roles (Winn, 2001).

When involving stakeholders it is important to recognise the whole person, as individuals, groups and organisations often have many relational roles, engaging with the organisation in multiple ways. For example, a staff member may be both employee, community member and may even be a victim of crime or family member of a prisoner. Thus, stakeholder’s roles, views and the ways in which they influence and shape the organisation are diverse and dynamic. A key role for today’s manager is to assist stakeholders to understand both how and why decisions are made, creating a transparent organisation which encourages stakeholders to collaborate, establishing confidence and trust through openness and engagement (Dill, 2008).

By utilising forms of collaboration and collective action, stakeholders and the organisation can harness greater resources for problem solving, create a sense of community and common purpose and validate decision making. Whilst conflict may be present, creating a community of stakeholders allows voices to be heard and creates a sense of acceptance and involvement which reduces the risk of stakeholders becoming adversarial towards the organisation (Wicks, Gilbert & Freeman, 1994).

Stakeholder groups often form collaborative networks in order to tackle complex social problems by combining resources and expertise to enhance outcomes which would be difficult to achieve alone (Butterfield, Reed & Lemak, 2004). The Tasmanian Government recognises this need to collaborate on issues which span across government departments and states in its policy document on collaboration that, “Ultimately, the benefit of collaborative governance is to improve policy and service delivery outcomes for citizens” (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2010, p. 4). Prisoners, as citizens, rely completely on the prison service to provide access to pro-social activities, as such collaborative governance is vital to ensure the involvement of the wider community in order to achieve a greater range of pro-social learning opportunities.

Lin (1999) states that networks provide information and access to resources and are used for support and advice. Networks of stakeholders may also have a positive effect on organisational innovation, however, they may also draw boundaries between people and encourage conformism. It is important that networks and partnerships are given time and resources to develop so that they may build social capital (Lin, 1999). Network ties often “reflect organisational structures and processes as well as social norms and the attributes of individuals” (Lin, 2001, p. 186). Thus, how stakeholders become involved in influencing prisoner learning, and their role in this, is influenced by the culture of the prison organisation and capability of prison management. Other influencing factors include the positional power of the stakeholder, their networks and their ability to engage and influence, often from the outside.

Although none of the literature relating to stakeholders is specifically about prison learning or the prison environment, it does provide a context for understanding

the important role stakeholders have in facilitating valued learning within the prison environment. It is hoped that this research will highlight the need for further studies into the perceptions and influence of stakeholders on the management of prisoner education. By understanding the ways in which stakeholders and networks operate, as well as theories of crime and education, we can begin to explore the influences on the learning which prisoners are able to access whilst incarcerated.

2.3.1 Stakeholders Influence on Prisoner Learning

Stakeholders influence on formal and informal prisoner learning is a non-linear and non-static concept, changing over time and shaped by a range of activities. Cooksey and Gates (1995) provide an outline of the interrelation of five interacting systems (environmental, organisational, individual, learning and social). These systems can be applied to understanding how stakeholders influence prisoner learning.

The model of prisoner learning shows a potentially non-linear non equilibrium-oriented perspective. It highlights the role which stakeholders play in influencing the provision of prisoner learning through these interacting systems. This perspective enables us to see prisoner learning as being changed by and changing through the interplay between the various systems and their stakeholders. “Issues are not simple and clean but intricately wired to political, social, historical and especially personal contexts” (Stake, 1995, p. 17). Each system comprises a complexity of interacting influences and paradigms, which create changes within the system itself. These five systems, along with multiple and varied stakeholders, influence prisoner learning.

Prisoner learning is therefore in a constant state of fluctuation due to this complex interplay of change (Cooksey & Gates, 1995). The complexity of prisoner learning “involves multiple potential outcomes including those unforeseen, an ever-changing mix of resources and human inputs, and hidden relationships between circumstances and human agents” (Pierson, 2010, p. 195). The systems and structures are dynamic forces shaped by the “recurring, re-iterative actions of the actors” (Garland, 2001, p. 24). It is the ways in which people think and their values which guide their choices and this is an integral part of the production of change and the continuation of routines (Garland, 2001). The values which stakeholders have, play an important role in policy development of prisoner learning and offender rehabilitation as “they serve to identify therapeutic goals and to place boundaries on what might be considered to be appropriate rehabilitative attempts”, they also inform the decisions made on a day to day basis when implementing such programs (Day & Ward, 2010, p. 291).

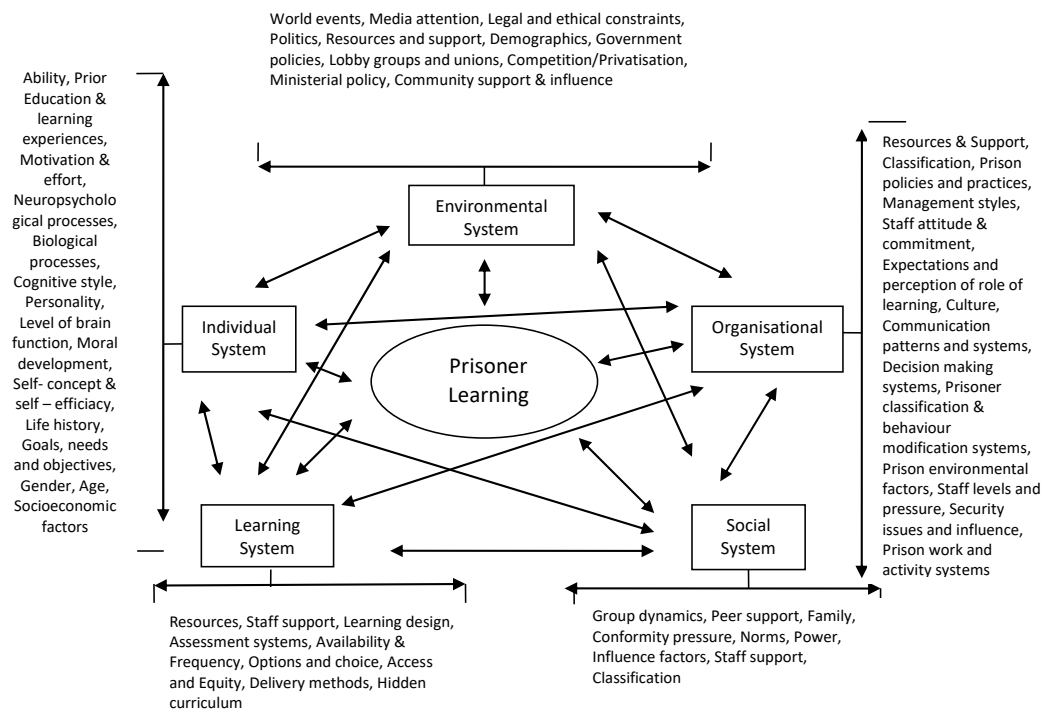


Figure 2.1. Model of prisoner learning (Adapted from Cooksey & Gates,

1995)

The individual system highlights the internal processes which shape prisoner learning. This includes not only the individual learner, but also the individual experiences of stakeholders which inform their perceptions of prisoners and the learning in which they engage. The social system highlights the impact of the social environment on prisoner learning highlighting the ways in which prisoners are influenced in their learning by others including their peers, family and staff. The power of the organisational system is particularly strong for prisoners learning as they are reliant on the system to fulfil all their needs (Johnson, 1996). The environmental system is concerned with the larger community and political issues which influence prisoner learning. The degree of community support and available resources for prisoner learning is a key variable affecting prisoner learning. The learning system highlights the options and choices available to prisoners, in particular access to formal learning opportunities. This system influences not only what is available but also affects the ways in which learning is designed and presented to the learner.

The interaction of each of these systems and the influence of the stakeholders involved impacts the daily lives of prisoners and the valued learning which they have access to. This research seeks to develop a greater understanding of each of the systems within the model in relation to the research questions by exploring both the literature and the data pertaining to each research question.

2.4 Summary

Through exploring the literature on prisoner learning, the interrelatedness of theories and issues becomes apparent, these interrelations highlight the complexity of prisoners' learning and the role which stakeholders play in influencing prisoner learning provision. Stakeholders can learn, create, adapt and manipulate their

environment, at the same time they are also subject to a wide variety of constraints – environmental, biological and cognitive – which moderate the extent to which they can successfully accomplish those abilities (Cooksey & Gates, 1995).

The model of prisoner learning highlights the complexity of the issue of engaging prisoners in personal change through rehabilitative efforts whilst they are incarcerated. There are numerous points throughout each of the systems which could lead to a failure to appropriately facilitate personal change and prisoner learning. Not all programs, work all the time, for all people, however, research (MacKenzie, 2006; Davis, et. al., 2013; Hall, 2015) does highlight the potential for education to produce the best results in regards to recidivism and desistance from crime.

Chapter 3

Methodology: Getting over the prison fence

“‘The community as a whole really does have a right to know what's happening behind those walls.’ Professor Rob White” (ABC News, 2008)

The purpose of this collective case study is to explore the perceptions of stakeholders of prisoner learning within Tasmania. The aim of the research is to explore the following research questions:

- What do stakeholders believe prisoners learn during their incarceration?
- What learning is valued by stakeholders?
- How can valued learning be enhanced?
- What do stakeholders believe are the benefits of valued learning?

A collective case study highlights a diversity of perception (Stake, 2008). In order to answer these questions attention needs to be focused on the identification of stakeholders and how learning is to be defined for the purpose of this research. The research provided an analysis of stakeholders' roles and perceptions of prisoner learning and include:

- Male and female ex-prisoners
- Community Corrections staff and management
- Contractors and suppliers of the Tasmanian Prison Service and the Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Education staff
- Community organisations and groups e.g. Prison Action Reform Group, Risdon Vale Community House, Salvation Army, Colony 47, Job Network members
- a sample of Politicians
- some members of the Judiciary, solicitors and other legal personnel
- a number of Tasmania Police staff and management

This chapter provides a discussion of the methodology employed to address these research questions. It commences with an outline of the research questions and the approach taken to address these questions. It outlines the role of the researcher within the data gathering process, along with the participants and how they were selected. It also addresses the data gathering methods and how the data were analysed.

3.1 Research Approach

As this study seeks to address perceptions within the community, a qualitative grounded theory approach was taken. Qualitative research describes “what it is like to be, do or think something” (Bouma, 1996, p. 169). The use of qualitative research allows participants to describe what is important to them, to share their stories, perceptions and feelings (Bouma, 1996). Meanings which are embedded in social reality can be grasped through qualitative research (Hessler, 1992).

Constructivist-qualitative inquiry can be distinguished by its desire to understand phenomena and situations as a whole. The constructivist approach to research views the world as a web of interconnections and complexity, seeking to gain an appreciation of the uniqueness of individual cases (Shkedi, 2005).

Researchers using this method desire “to understand a situation as it is constructed by the participants” (Shkedi, 2005, p. 5), believing that “the most powerful way to understand human beings is to watch, talk, listen” (Shkedi, 2005, p.7).

3.2 Research Design

This research aims to “clarify the understanding of the participant’s world as they emerge from their stories” (Shkedi, 2005, p. 42). The use of the narrative mode is well suited to understanding perceptions and experiences of people (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Narrative allows for ambiguity and dilemma, enabling participants to use stories to organize, manage and communicate their perception of the world and how they interact within it (Shkedi, 2005). The focus of narrative enquiry is “an exploration of the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals experiences were constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 42). An individual’s perception of their world and their actions occur through their own cultural lens (Alldred & Gillies, 2002).

Narrative research enables the understanding of individual and social change and allows the researcher to explore the different and contradictory layers of meaning within a social setting (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). Narratives provide for the need for political and social change and stimulates discussion which empowers action (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Narratives allow for the exploration of the cultural, social and institutional contexts present, describing the

experience of people as they endeavour to make meaning of their lives within these contexts (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007).

The case study researcher is concerned with uniqueness and describing the social, personal and political contexts of the case (Burns, 1997). Case studies can have a powerful effect of illuminating issues which can “challenge the existing order of things” (Gillham, 2000, p. 102). The social construction of reality creates multiple meanings and relies on the researcher to “understand the multiple realities from the perspectives of participants” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 9). Case study reveals an insight into the human experience (Stake, 1998) and seeks to understand participants’ personal views and the ways in which they understand life events and issues (Burns, 1997; Stake, 2008). The case study is “richly descriptive, because it is grounded in deep and varied sources of information” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 16). It involves an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006), and allows for the discovery of contextual conditions (Yin, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (2002) argue that it is this type of description, which allows for understanding of context and situation, may provide a learning experience for the reader. The case study can engage and transform the understanding of a phenomenon by extending the reader’s experience (Donmoyer, 1990). A sociological perspective to case study research was undertaken, to focus on the variety of social institutions within the criminal justice system and the perceptions within society of prisoners’ learning (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). This was combined with a phenomenological approach to discovering the lived experiences of those who have experienced prisoner learning (Lichtman, 2006).

A case study is a system (Burns, 1997), in this case it is bounded both by the geographical region of Tasmania and by focusing on learning which occurs within

adult prison facilities managed by the Tasmania Prison Service. A key strength of the case study is the use of multiple sources of data (Burns, 1997; Gillham, 2000). In this case, data were gathered from a range of stakeholders and from documents. Case study allows the reader to learn about and understand the experience of stakeholders through narratives and description (Stake, 2008).

3.3 The Researcher

The researcher is an ‘instrument’ operating within qualitative inquiry, and as such, the research should include information about them (Patton, 2002). There is an increasing emphasis on being transparent as a researcher engaged in qualitative research, “we are to write not as unknown, all-knowing forces but as people who share our stances, methods, feelings, biases, reasoning, successes, and failures” (Ely, 2007, p. 578). The narrative researcher is part of the discovery and is involved as a listener and interviewer, the researcher walks a path between involvement and critical thinking – balancing distance with immersion (Shkedi, 2005). Indeed, “growth and learning are part of the research process” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 14). “A qualitative researcher has to learn to see, hear, perceive and understand in new ways” (Hill, 2007). This case study is concerned with understanding the perceptions of others about what a diverse group of people learn in a unique social setting, the researcher must strive to understand participant’s perspectives as they see them. Views, values and perceptions, contrary to the researcher’s own, will be articulated by participants and the researcher must not judge or condemn, but reflect and pursue an understanding with the participant (Hill, 2007).

For simplicity the pronoun “I” will be used, it is hoped that this will prove more interesting for readers (Silverman, 2005). It is my intention to be open and

honest with the reader about who I am and why I have chosen this research topic, for in narrative inquiry it is almost impossible “as a researcher to stay silent or to present a kind of perfect, idealized, inquiring, moralizing self” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 62). As a family member of a prisoner I have personal experiences which influence my perception of what prisoners learn during their incarceration, I have my own stories and experiences of previous research into the phenomena of prisoner learning.

I became passionate about discovering what prisoners learn and how they change because of their experience of prison. Seeking to find answers to what seemed to be so many new questions, I commenced an Honours thesis on prisoner learning. I quickly found that access and politics were key issues which I had to face consistently during the project. As Shelton (2007) states “For me, getting in has always been more difficult than getting out” (p. 3). Navigating gatekeepers, working out the conflicting and shifting rules and identifying the blockages to getting access were difficult obstacles to be overcome in the research.

People’s stories are powerful, they touch us with their humanity and bond us together. It is my hope that these authentic stories, told in people’s own voice will create a dissertation full of real stories. Learning is an emotional journey, not simply a cognitive one. It is my desire to capture the complexity of individuals, their perceptions and their learning journey which guides my methodological choice. “Not to speak about, or for ‘others’ encourages silences and gaps, which marginalize and exclude, while cementing the privilege of those more powerful voices” (Gillies & Aldred, 2002, p. 41). As such the use of own voice is woven throughout this thesis to highlight the perspectives of stakeholders and allow that story to enrich the work.

Spending time in the prison with community organisations was a very valuable experience, although not being able to interview prisoners due to access

restrictions was at first frustrating. However, the honesty and willingness of prisoners to share their stories and struggles with me, to share their learning and knowledge with a stranger, was enlightening and rewarding. I owe a great deal of thanks to both community workers who invited me to share their days and to the people who allowed me entry into their lives and who openly shared their stories.

3.4 Authenticity and Trustworthiness

“Honesty and accuracy should be the characteristics of any intellectual enterprise” (Bouma, 1996, p. 13). Truth speaks to the perceptions and understandings which evolve from creating a holistic perspective of the phenomenon (Shkedi, 2005). Trustworthiness is different to truth in that truth assumes “an objective reality, whereas the former moves the process into the social world” (Reissman, 2002, p. 258). Trustworthiness consists of credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Whilst procedures such as member checking increase trustworthiness, narratives “are not static; meanings of experiences shift as consciousness changes” (Reissman, 2002, p.259). A researcher’s work is their own and they must be responsible for the representation of others narratives (Reisman, 2002). Table 2.1 highlights the ways in which this research responds to the issues of authenticity and trustworthiness.

Table 3.1

Summary of Processes Used to Address Authenticity and Trustworthiness

Criteria	How addressed in this thesis
Revealing the ideas that are brought to the research by the researcher and addressing personal bias (Merriam, 1998; Richards, 2005)	Set out in The Researcher section of this chapter
Member checks (Stake, 1995; Cresswell 2005)	Where possible, typed transcripts were sent to respondents involved for them to check and change if required. However, with some participants, there may be issues with literacy which may impact the validity of this method.
Triangulation and the search for additional perceptions (Stake, 1995), drawing from multiple sources (Cresswell, 2005) and clarifying the meaning (Stake, 2008)	Sampling was both through purposive and snowballing methods to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders were identified and interviewed. Secondary data in the form of documents were collected from the public domain.
Thick descriptions, detail and contexts (Richards, 2005), and understanding the experience of others and the meaning of those experiences within their setting and culture (Shkedi, 2005)	In depth interviews were conducted for up to one hour in duration. Text and documents were collected from the public domain and from participants. A wide array of literature was reviewed for context and background.
Reflecting on data (Richards, 2005)	Reflection on data consisted of listening to interviews and reading transcripts. Data from transcribed interviews and documents were organised and categories were identified. These categories were organised into a coding tree (Tesch, 1990; Cresswell, 2005). The codes were then organised into themes, which were analysed according to how they related to each other. Commonalities, differences and linkages were explored to reveal various stakeholder perceptions. The data were then analysed for multiple perspectives, which is important in order to reveal the complex nature of the phenomena (Cresswell, 2005).

Whilst there are no definitive standards for evaluating the authenticity of the conclusions which are drawn from qualitative research, there remains a fundamental requirement to “consider carefully the evidence and methods on which conclusions are based” (Bachman & Schutt, 2008, p. 200). Authenticity in the research is supported through a clear description of how the project was conducted and how the findings were constructed from the data (Merriam, 1998). Authenticity is also tied to fairness and balance “all stakeholder views, perspectives, claims, concerns and voices should be apparent in the text” (Guba & Lincoln, 2008, p. 274).

The ability of the researcher to provide an account for how they interacted in the field, both with the stakeholders of the research and with problems and issues that were encountered is important to establishing authenticity and trustworthiness (Bachman & Schutt, 2008) and extends to issues of accountability, honesty and being transparent in research (Doucet & Mauthner, 2002).

3.5 Ethical Issues

Ethics play a central role in narrative inquiry as it is relational, formed by obtaining and reflecting on peoples’ personal journeys (Clandinin, 2007; Josselson, 2007). Ethical issues are an ongoing aspect of the research process and are integral to every aspect of the research (Miller & Bell, 2002).

Prisoners have been removed from society as a punishment, and due to their incarceration, live in a highly restricted and controlled environment. As such, they could be classified as a vulnerable research group. This research targets both the vulnerable and the powerful within society, considering the perspectives of prisoner learning through the narratives of a wide range of stakeholders.

The research is also sensitive in nature, asking participants to divulge their stories, their perceptions of prison life, of crime and their personal experiences. The research questions focus on the prison experience, and for previously incarcerated persons, this may involve recalling and thinking about personal experiences which were traumatic. Sensitive research not only poses an intrusive threat to participants, asking them to share their private thoughts, but is also politically threatening as it involves social conflict and powerful individuals in society. It is a duty of the sensitive researcher to ensure that no harm is done to participants as a result of their involvement with the research process, for this reason ethical considerations were a priority for this research (Liamputtong, 2007). Ensuring that safety took many forms

- access to professional visiting rooms
- interviewing in locations where people felt comfortable and safe
- ensuring access to counselling
- reading consent forms to people to ensure understanding if literacy is an undisclosed issue
- ensuring participants' personal information was never disclosed
- verbally explaining issues of confidentiality to participants
- ensuring participants knew that they could withdraw at any time.

In summary, as described by Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2006), ethics is about sharing clarity on the nature of the agreement with your participants. There is an explicit contract entered into in the form of a Consent Form, and there is also an implicit contract created through the relationship. The researcher attempts to create a relationship which allows the participant to share and self-reveal, which in turn

creates an implication that the material is treated with respect and compassion (Josselson, 2007).

Tasmania is a small community and thus confidentiality is a vital issue which must be considered. Maintaining anonymity within such a small community is difficult as it becomes easier for readers to identify or believe that they have identified others (Punch, 1994). Personal information was thus excluded from the data and confidentiality maintained through a coding system. The coding system consists of an abbreviation of their role (e.g. CC is Community Corrections) and a number. This coding system was applied to audio-recordings and transcripts (see Appendix C).

Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were difficult to address entirely, particularly for persons under Community Corrections orders, as Community Corrections staff would be aware of which persons were participating in the research due to the need for community corrections to provide the researcher an introduction to their clients. Interviews were held in private rooms or at the person's residence to reduce the risk of community corrections staff overhearing the interview. All participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time up until the dissertation was written.

Informed consent is an important ethical consideration, it relies on participants having a sufficient understanding of the nature of the research with a clear understanding of the nature of risk and how issues of confidentiality will be addressed. Access and consent can be closely linked in research which involves participants who are difficult to access. Consent forms were used and read to all participants to ensure literacy issues did not interfere with informed consent.

The role of 'gatekeeper', particularly those who wield power within the social environment, can be problematic for the researcher seeking to ensure consent is

voluntary, this is particularly important with research groups who are vulnerable and less powerful. The researcher needs to continually evaluate and reflect on these issues during the course of the research, an ongoing process of negotiation between researcher and participant (Miller & Bell, 2002). Self-disclosure is also an important issue in researching vulnerable groups, impacting on both the building of trust and informed consent. The creation of research involves the researcher as an individual. Sharing personal stories allows for the establishment of common ground, validates and shows respect for the experiences of participants, and creates an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual understanding during the interview (Liamputtong, 2007).

Researchers may also have “a statutory obligation to disclose information about illegal activities or may be subject to legal orders compelling disclosure of information obtained during research activities. It is foreseeable that in interviewing prisoners illegal activity may be disclosed, even where the research is not designed to expose it” (Roberts & Indemaur, 2008, p. 311). In this situation there are limits to confidentiality which were shared with participants and this was spoken about prior to interviewing all participants.

Participants who are involved in in-depth interviews are often asked questions which may involve discussing intimate and private details about their experiences. This may involve embarrassment or the resurfacing of painful memories, and which may have long term effects (Merriam, 1998). Issues such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the effects of institutionalisation were considered. The process of creating knowledge and being involved in a research project is an emotional experience for all those involved (Bosworth, 2005). Indeed, it has been argued that research without any subjective feeling is impossible and that these emotions can both

guide the research and be a source of data (Liebling, 1999). Great care was taken to provide access to support services, particularly for formerly incarcerated persons.

Another ethical concern for researchers to consider is what the results will mean to participants and how the results will impact on participants. “While researchers can never be sure how their findings will be received, they must always be sure to think carefully about the implications of their work, who the results of this work may affect, and how” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 442). The use of narratives and ‘own voice’ within the research has ethical issues in regards to anonymity, therefore excerpts chosen for publication were chosen only when there was no risk of identification. Research is not conducted within a vacuum, as such “the politics can be so powerful that it can fundamentally affect the purpose, passage and ultimate conclusions of the research” (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005, p. 284). Politics, objectivity and relationships need to be balanced within the research process. Research is not only affected by our relationships with those in the field but the researcher’s access is often determined by their ability to maintain relationships which will permit the research to continue (Bailey, 2007; Layder, 1993). This is particularly relevant to maintaining relationships with prison stakeholders who have the power to deny access to both institutions and prisoners.

3.6 Stages of Research

Prior to commencing this dissertation, a Methodology chapter was drafted for an assignment in a Research Methods course. This formed part of the preparation and planning stage, which also included the drafting of a Research Proposal which was submitted to gain entry into the Doctoral program of the University of Tasmania. An Ethics Application was then written and submitted to the Human Research Ethics

Committee (Tasmania) Network in 2010. A submission requesting approval from the Director of Community Corrections and from the Tasmania Police Service was also obtained (see Appendix E). A literature review was also drafted at this stage.

The next stage of the research was data collection. Qualitative data were collected through semi structured questions (see Appendix C) using both telephone and face-to-face interviews of approximately one hour. Interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Text based documents were sourced to provide additional background information and quantitative data.

The third stage of the research involved data analysis and the writing of the dissertation. Data were organised manually and categories were identified from the transcribed interviews and documentary data and then organised into a coding tree (Tesch 1990; Cresswell 2005). These codes were then analysed to identify themes. Themes were analysed according to how they related to each other and explored for commonalities, differences and linkages between various stakeholder perceptions using a grounded theory approach. Notes were then written based on this analysis. This analysis for multiple perspectives is important in order to uncover the complex nature of the subject (Cresswell 2005). This was done by colour coding the transcript sections by individual and by using font highlighting to differentiate between stakeholder groups. An example of this colour coding and analysis into themes is included in Appendix C. The final stage of the research was the writing of the dissertation, which was an iterative process.

A range of documentary data were collected through three Right to Information requests with the Department of Justice, the applications and correspondence received in regards to the applications are included in Appendix D.

This data was analysed using the same methodology as the transcripts, through colour coding based on the research questions.

3.7 Limitations of the Research

Gay and Airasian (2003) define a limitation as “some aspect of the research that the researcher knows may negatively affect the study but over which he or she has no control” (p. 91). Limitations of this research include the financial and time restrictions of being an independent post-graduate student, which also then creates the need to restrict the number of participants.

Problems of access are common on research within prison settings (Patenaude, 2004; Schossler, 2008). Access is subject to approval from the Director of Prisons, and the Tasmania Prison Service refused permission for interviews to be undertaken with current staff or prisoners. Another issue is that all public service employees are very wary about speaking about their department, particularly where their views may be construed as less than positive, due to the State Service Act 2000. The Act states “An employee must at all times behave in a way that does not adversely affect the integrity and good reputation of the State Service” (Tasmanian Legislation Online, 2000) which is often taken by staff to mean that they should not be critical of the service to ‘outsiders’.

3.8 Data Gathering Methods

“All evidence is of some use to the case study researcher: nothing is turned away” (Gillham, 2000, p. 20). The researcher must listen and discover how participants perceive themselves and interpret their world (Shkedi, 2005). Gay and Airasian (2003) argued that a well-conducted interview can produce rich, in-depth

data. In Multiple Case Narrative, the data are collected from many participants providing both a broad and deep descriptive image (Shkedi, 2005). The in-depth interview allows the researcher to understand the experiences and perceptions of participants and assists them to construct and articulate their narratives (Shkedi, 2005). Schossler (2008) argued that “what emerges from an all-too-brief encounter with an interviewee through the medium of the narrative can provide data just as rich as that from any other methodological enterprise” (p. 1513).

Whilst it is helpful to create an outline of questions for both ethical approval and to create a framework for the evaluation of the research by peers, great interviews are always enhanced by flexibility and adaptation of questions in order to meet the needs of the participant and to enhance the course of the interview (Flick, 2007). In depth interviews call for conversations in which both parties develop meaning together (Shkedi, 2005). The aim is to allow the participant to tell their own stories in their own language, it is a conversational meeting (Shkedi, 2005). Open-ended questions were used to encourage the participants to use a casual and narrative format, and allow for their perceptions and experiences to be told, unconstrained. The use of probing questions created the opportunity for various topics to be explored in more depth and also assisted with clarification of responses (Cresswell, 2005), which allowed for jointly constructed meaning (Shkedi, 2005).

Interview length is less important than the skill of the interviewer, short interviews can create rich meaning when the interviewer knows the topic, establishes rapport, understands the linguistic style of participants and is flexible and responsive to participant narratives (Kvale, 2007). Relationship management is an important consideration for every qualitative researcher (Bachman & Schutt, 2008). Bachman and Schutt (2008) contend that it is important to the research that whilst conducting

interviews the researcher establishes a relationship with the participant based on respect and trust. Narrative research is personal and therefore requires sensitivity and the establishment of a trusting relationship between equals, empowering the participant to tell their story (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006).

Documents provide researchers with information which “may differ from and may not be available in spoken form” (Hodder, 1994, p. 393). This form of secondary data was used to provide background information on the prison institutions and their management and other community organisations. Other documentary data includes personal correspondence, media interviews, parliamentary transcripts, letters to newspapers and comments on Tasmanian online forum sites. The decision to use these types of texts is due to the significant role of the media in the way that we make sense of our world (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007), including the criminal justice system, and the use and outcomes of imprisonment. Documents are socially constructed and as such reflect the social values and norms present within a community (McNeill & Chapman, 2005).

The use of multiple methods in order to capture a deep understanding of prisoner learning, and through the use of combination of interviews and documents, produce a range of perspectives, which adds depth and complexity to the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Three Right to Information requests were submitted to the Department of Justice (see Appendix D) and a range of documents were provided as a result of these requests. Documentary data were analysed using the research questions and colour coding to uncover the perceptions of internal stakeholders and decision makers in regards to prisoner learning.

3.9 Participants

Multiple case narrative seeks to explore the single case narrative of many participants using purposeful sampling to focus on the most representative participants (Shkedi, 2005). It is also common that during interviews participants will recommend others to the researcher who may have an interesting perspective on the phenomena and thus snowball sampling was also employed. “Snowball sampling is the process of selecting a sample using networks” (Kumar, 1996, p.162). This allows for an iterative process, as the researcher becomes more knowledgeable about the groups of stakeholders within the community and as they become more aware of the research, participants may become self-selecting or are referred by other participants (Flick, 2007). Participants were asked to think of others who may have a different perspective of prisoner learning, this was done to provide a wide range of perceptions on prisoner learning. It is important that participants represent “a wide range of people and positions in the larger population under study” (Shkedi, 2005, p. 42).

This case study concerns perceptions from a wide range of stakeholders representing the views of prisoner learning, thus it is important that participants represent a number of stakeholder groups. Participants were identified, firstly, based on their role as a stakeholder of prisons in Tasmania and then based on the type of stakeholder that they were. This purposive sampling (Cresswell, 2007) of initial participants was then further enhanced by asking these participants to recommend other participants from within the community.

The stakeholders fall into four main groups:

- those who have personally experienced incarceration (prisoners and ex-prisoners) – 6 participants
- those who work in the criminal justice system (police, court staff, corrections staff, community corrections service staff) – 24 participants,
- those who work with the criminal justice system (service providers, Department of Education) – 13 participants and
- members of the wider community (other stakeholders).

A number of government departments were asked to approve access for the researcher to participants including the Tasmanian Police Service and the Department of Justice for access to Court, Community Corrections and Tasmanian Prison Service locations and staff. Approvals were granted by the Department of Education, Community Corrections and the Tasmania Police Service (see Appendix D). Approval was granted by the Ethics Committee on 28th January 2011 (see Appendix E).

A total of 43 people were interviewed.

Table 3.2

Interviews

Number of participants	Group
12	Community Corrections staff
7	Staff from community sector organisations
6	Department of Education staff
6	Formerly incarcerated persons
5	Police
4	Employees of Department of Health and Human Services (3) and Tasmania Prison Service (1)
2	Legal and court staff
1	Members of Parliament

Formerly incarcerated persons, both male and female, were sourced via invitation and referral from other stakeholders. Of those who work or worked in the criminal justice system a total of 23 interviews were conducted, including police, legal representatives, ex-corrections and health staff, corrections management, and court officers. These participants were selected using both purposive sampling and snowballing sampling techniques. Participants who work with the criminal justice system were chosen via snowball sampling from educational institutions and community organisations, a total of thirteen interviews were conducted from this group.

Participants were given a code which related to their stakeholder status (CC for Community Corrections, PO for Tasmania Police, PL for politician, DE for Department of Education staff, EP for formerly incarcerated person, CS for a community services worker).

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a structured process of bringing order to a group of data (Shkedi, 2005). It is a “search for explanation and understanding” (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006, p. 206). The data are broken down in order to make meaning of it. Each piece of data is analysed to find commonalities, differences and linkages. During analysis the researcher must think both systematically, logically and creatively (Shkedi, 2005).

The strategy for analysis of the data for this case study was to develop a descriptive framework (Yin, 2003). It is this descriptive framework which will assist the narratives to be explored for each stakeholder group. In a narrative approach to data analysis, the researcher searches for the narratives, experiences of individuals

and their context which create themes (Creswell, 2007). Bailey (2007) argues that themes do not emerge from the data, it is the researcher who creates themes and that those “themes are recurring patterns, topics, viewpoints, emotions, concepts, events” (Bailey, 2007, p. 153). Narrative analysis seeks to understand the stories and their meanings which unfold during the interview process, allowing the narratives to speak for themselves (Kvale, 2007). The use of stories assumes a point of view (Reissman, 2002) and provides the researcher with a “snapshot of their perspective” (Alldred & Gillies, 2002, p. 149). Multiple case narrative seeks to understand the perceptions of a variety stakeholders and the stories which describe these perceptions, along with the lived experiences of prisoners and former prisoners.

It is important that the data are not reduced so as to diminish the meaning of what is said (Lichtman, 2006). Multiple readings, reflection upon themes and a multiplicity of analysis techniques can be used by a researcher to understand and create meaning (Kvale, 2007). Creswell (2007) describes a data analysis loop rather than a linear path to analysis, which involves data management, reading, creating notes and memos, describing, classifying, interpreting, visualising and representing. The use of multiple types of data in case study research also requires the use of a range of analytical procedures including comparing and contrasting, and exploration of unusual and contradictory findings. This may include the use of matrices, flow charts and the use of quantitative data to interpret findings (Freebody, 2003). The purpose of this analysis of data is to take the reader into the centre of the experiences being described (Denzin, 2004).

Data for this research was analysed by applying the research question to the data and then colour coding the data based on the research question that the data most directly related to. An example of this is included in Appendix C.

3.11 Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodology chosen to explore the research questions. The research is a case study bounded by the geographical region of Tasmania, exploring multiple adult prison sites and a variety of stakeholders from the community. The use of the stakeholder's own voice is used throughout the thesis to provide the reader with a more detailed understanding of stakeholder's perceptions.

A narrative approach was used to explore the phenomenon of prisoner learning, with sampling of stakeholders using both purposive and snowballing techniques. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders and also through documentary data. Data were then coded into themes. A phenomenological approach was used to understand the lived experience of learning within a prison environment.

Chapter 4

Background and Context: what is over the prison fence?

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the reader to Tasmania and provide a penological account of Tasmanian prisons incorporating participants' own voices to highlight stakeholder perceptions. The chapter will commence with an overview of the people who are central to this thesis, prisoners in Tasmania. The chapter includes a synopsis of recent history of the prison service concentrating on prisoner learning, including a discussion of '*Breaking the Cycle: A Strategic Plan for Tasmanian Corrections 2011-2020*' and the '*Tasmanian Prison Service Education and Training Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016*'. It will provide the reader with an understanding of the changes of prison policy over time and the ways in which it has been practiced. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the stakeholders of the Tasmanian Prison Service.

4.2 Tasmanian Prison Population

Prisoners are not a homogenous group and, variations among prisoners are central to our understanding of their lives and experiences. This diversity includes differences in their gender, age, class, previous occupation, political and world views, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, parental status, physical and mental health characteristics, marital status and criminogenic factors. While statistics can provide some insight into this diversity, they tend to generalise and as a result of these generalisations statistics may not fully represent the diversity of the prison population.

Statistics compiled in 2016 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) show that there were 569 prisoners in Tasmania, an increase of 10% from the previous year, of whom 503 (88 per cent) were male. The median age for males was 34 years. Ninety-two prisoners identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, representing 16 per cent of the total prisoner population. A total of 155 prisoners (27%) had not been sentenced. In Tasmania, sentenced and un-sentenced prisoners are not usually segregated. Just over three in five prisoners (61% or 349 prisoners) had previously been imprisoned under sentence.

The adult imprisonment rate was 141 prisoners per 100,000 adult population, an increase from 130 prisoners per 100,000 adult population in 2015. Up until 2014 Tasmania was the only state which had seen a decline in imprisonment rates over the past ten years. The number of prisoners in Tasmania dropped from 512 in 2006 to 451 in 2014. The number of prisoners in Tasmania rose in 2015 to 519 and in 2016 rose again to 569. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

4.2.1 Prisons in Tasmania

There is not a great deal of reflection about what's gone wrong and I think, even within the prison structure, there has not been a reflection about what was good about the old prison and what was bad about the old prison and how can we minimize negatives or increase the positives of that experience, because they just built the bricks and mortar and thought that everybody would be happy. Unless there's a really positive commitment from government and the justice department about community corrections and the prison working together, it won't work, and they need to work very strongly with other stakeholders.....and there needs to be acceptance with those stakeholders that it's a whole of government approach and a whole of a community approach (Community Corrections staff, CC005, 1, June 22, 2011)

The Department of Justice is responsible for the operation of the Tasmania Prison Service and Community Corrections. On their website, the mission of the Tasmania Prison Service is stated as “to contribute to a safer Tasmania by ensuring the safe, secure containment of inmates and providing them with opportunities for rehabilitation, personal development and community engagement” (Department of Justice, 2010a). The values to which they aspire state that

as Tasmania Prison Service employees we demonstrate ethical behaviour, professionalism and integrity by:

- Being respectful, honest, fair and consistent
- Being open-minded to other beliefs and opinions
- Demonstrating enthusiasm and commitment in our work
- Recognising good work and striving towards continuous improvement

- Leading by example and taking responsibility for our actions
- Communicating with our colleagues and others in an accountable and timely manner
- Embracing the benefits of teamwork. (Department of Justice, 2010)

Liebling (2004) argues that there are a wide variety of barriers to high ideals which prevent them from impacting on the lives of individual prisoners, for example, union activity, staff shortages, a lack of quality control, bureaucratic inertia, lack of management ability, poor standards, miscommunication between management and staff, cost cutting, a lack of clarity about goals and concern about efficiency. Some of these issues were addressed in recent reports into the Tasmania Prison Service.

4.2.2 Prison Infrastructure

In 2006, the new prisons on the Risdon site were opened at a cost of approximately \$90 million. The original men's prison, now called the Ron Barwick Prison, remains in operation as a minimum-security prison (Department of Justice, 2007b). Figures 3.1-3.4 show maps and images of the prison.

The Risdon site consists of:

Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison

- Minimum security women's prison - housed in a single unit with 11 rooms. It also includes a 7 bed 'mother and baby' unit capable of housing mothers with their infant children.
- Medium security women's prison - housed in a single unit with 12 cells.
- Maximum security women's prison - 15 single cells located around a common area which includes lounge and dining facilities.

- The women's prison campus includes an outdoor basketball court and visits area, several multi-purpose facilities, areas for education and programs activities and a health clinic.

Risdon Prison Complex

- Minimum security men's prison – the original prison building has been upgraded to provide accommodation for 120 minimum security prisoners.
- Medium security men's prison - Accommodation is provided for 196 prisoners', housed in units of either 6 or 8 beds, with one buddy (two person) cell per unit.
- Maximum security men's prison – mainstream inmates are housed in two units of 26 beds with both single and buddy cells located around a common area. Accommodation is provided for 93 maximum security prisoners'
- Two prison workshops, each with a classroom area
- An education unit includes multipurpose classrooms and office space for specialist staff.
- The health centre located within the men's prison provides 6 in-patient beds and facilities for out-patient health services.
- Other facilities include a processing area where inmates are processed in and out of the prison and a staff operations centre from where the prison is managed. (Department of Justice, 2007a)

In addition to the above facility, work continues on the site. Stage D of the Prisons Infrastructure Redevelopment Program consists of an investment of over \$20 million.

The Tasmania Prison Service also operates two reception prisons, one in Hobart and the other in Launceston. The Hobart Reception Prison is a five-story building situated between the Hobart Police Station and the Court of Petty Sessions. It holds 40 single cells and 10 police watch cells, housing both male and female prisoners. The Launceston Reception Prison has a capacity for 33 persons, both male and female prisoners are held here. The majority of prisoners in these facilities are awaiting trial, although it also houses high protection prisoners.

Hayes Prison Farm, located near New Norfolk in the south of the state, was a minimum-security farm prison with a capacity for 70 males. It had been operating as a working prison farm since 1937 and was the first of its kind in Australia. In June 2011, the Government decided to decommission and sell Hayes Prison Farm. The reasoning behind this decision was to centralise services to the Risdon site to enable “improved rehabilitation and employment opportunities...and by providing improved access to programs, education, and skills-based training” (Department of Justice, 2013, p. 33). Prisoners were transferred to two divisions at the Ron Barwick Minimum Security Prison. In addition, two existing houses on the Risdon site were converted into independent living units for prisoners and named the O’Hara Cottages. The vegetable processing operation was transferred to Ron Barwick from Hayes, and other works were undertaking including the relocation of a staff car park and staff gymnasium along with refurbishment of the staff social club rooms. Hayes Prison Farm was formally decommissioned in September 2012 with works on Ron Barwick Prison being finalized in July 2013 (Department of Justice, 2013). In January 2014, *The Mercury* newspaper reported a statement from the Department of Justice that “since the closure of Hayes in August 2012, about \$290,000 had been spent on security and \$20,000 on maintenance” (Smith, 2014). It was sold at auction in 2015.

4.2.3 Financial Information

Because it's not a good environment and it should be a last resort when it comes to sentencing and it's an expensive way to deal with these issues and often they do come out worse than when they went in. (Community Services sector staff, CS002, 1, June 14, 2011)

The budget for prison services in Tasmania for 2010-2011 was \$50,693,000, with an additional \$100,000 for capital expenditure. The budgeted cost per prisoner per day was \$282 (Parliament of Tasmania, 2010). The budget for prison services in Tasmania for 2012-13 was \$55,562,000, with the cost per prisoner per day having risen to \$327 (excluding capital costs).

Infrastructure needs continue to be funded with preliminary planning for Stage D of the Prisons Infrastructure Redevelopment Program commencing during 2010-11. Funding of \$15.4 million was provided to progress the project in 2012-13 (Parliament of Tasmania, 2012). In the 2013-14 State Government budget, Launceston Reception Prison received additional funding of \$1 million to address urgent safety and security issues. Additional funding was also provided to address security issues found in the newly built Risdon Prison Medium Security accommodation units.

Correctional Services received an increase of \$2.5 million per year over four years (a total of \$10 million) to meet increasing operating costs. In 2013-14, an additional \$1.1 million was provided to Prison Services and an extra \$1.4 million to Community Corrections. In addition, \$235,000 was earmarked for continued work on Stage D with a forward estimate of \$2,229,000 for 2014-15.

The total budget for prison services in 2013-14 was \$55,562,000 and the cost per prisoner per day had risen to \$328.10 (Parliament of Tasmania, 2013). In 2016 the cost had risen to \$363.30 per day (Australian Productivity Commission, 2016).

4.2.4 Past and Present: Recent Developments in ‘Corrections’

In 2009 the then Minister for Corrections, Ms. Lisa Singh, embarked on the development of a ten-year strategic plan for Tasmanian Corrections. Stakeholder consultations resulted in the publication of a discussion paper prior to the release of the final plan, which identified six outcome areas:

- sentencing options,
- community engagement,
- offender rehabilitation and reintegration and community safety,
- integrated and accessible service delivery,
- workforce development and support and
- integrity and governance. (Department of Justice, 2009)

In regards to the delivery of programs and educational services to prisoners in Tasmania the report states that while existing programs “show great promise” they “often lack the scope and scale they need to make a significant difference” (Department of Justice, 2009, p. 1). The discussion paper states that stakeholders want to see an increase in learning which relates to gaining employment including trade-based training, partnerships with employers and acknowledged that “more could be done, especially in the area of vocational education” (p. 43).

The discussion paper also acknowledges that imprisonment without rehabilitation increases the risk of reoffending and it supported the use of the ‘risk needs responsivity’ (RNR) model (Department of Justice, 2009). The Tasmanian

Ombudsman's report (Ombudsman Tasmania, 2010) highlighted the lack of activities to prisoners housed in the Tamar unit within Risdon Prison. It is likely that those community members housed within these units would be 'high risk' offenders, and given the basis of the RNR model, they are those most in need of program delivery to address their criminogenic needs. However, all prisoners interviewed stated that the regime was "boring and soul destroying" (p. 97) in the Tamar Unit. The report also stated that "the boredom is extremely oppressive, with nothing to stimulate the prisoners other than hours and hours of television" (p. 98). This unit lacks any space for group programs or education and no programs or industry was available to these prisoners. The report states that the availability of educational programs "remains limited" (p. 99). Further, the unit is one which "does not reflect respect for the inherent dignity of the prisoners. Nor does it reflect any aim towards their reform or rehabilitation" (p. 100). It is possible, that despite standards and performance targets, a prison can still practice violence and the abuse of prisoners' basic human rights (Liebling, 2004). The report provides a glimpse of the reality of prison life in Tasmania for some prisoners, particularly those labelled as 'troublesome'. For four years the unit continued operating in this manner, despite impending legal action, Ombudsman investigations and numerous complaints from stakeholders. This approach can be contrasted with the Corrections Plan Discussion Paper which states, "punishment is embodied in the loss of freedom imposed on an offender by the court. It is not appropriate for Correctional Services to impose any further punishment on the offender, that is, corrective services should avoid cruelty and deprivation" (Department of Justice, 2009, p. 10).

Two Masters theses were found on the Tasmania Prison Service, aside from the authors' Honours research in 2008, Paterson in 1988 and Cianchi in 2009. These

studies, despite the years which separate them, find some consistent themes which will be discussed in this section.

There are many ways that prison staff can punish prisoners including delaying requests, refusing to allow prisoners to move around within the complex, failing to pass on messages, unduly searching cells or prisoners and the indiscriminate use of prison rule infractions (Paterson, 1988). Many officers are “reluctant to interact with prisoners despite the fact that it these relationships that are necessary” to ensure rehabilitation and the good order of the prison environment (Cianchi, 2009, p. 25) and it was stated that some officers do not even view prisoners as human beings (Cianchi, 2009). The attitudes of prison staff are thought to directly influence the success of rehabilitation programs and the successful reintegration of prisoners after their release (Kjelsberg, Skoglund, & Rustad, 2007).

Interestingly, in the 1980's and 1990's prisoners were producing their own television program 'Live at Five' for internal broadcast (Evans, 2004), they also participated in hobby groups, adult education programs and AA meetings, being released in the evenings at 6pm to attend a wide variety of learning activities (Paterson, 1988). A peer literacy program commenced in 1982 and by 1994 there was a wide variety of vocational education courses on offer such as tree felling, chainsaw use, dairy farm management, diesel engineering, horticulture, welding and carpentry (Evans, 2004). Prisoners travelled between prisons and out in to the community to participate in education and training, surprisingly comprising prisoners from all classification levels (Evans, 2004). It is possible that the rise in risk assessment and 'moral panics' of the period (Evans, 2004), along with a focus of recruitment from police services and other quasi-military organisations, worked in combination to limit any further continuation of prisoners exiting the prison for education and learning. An

overriding focus on security and containment may not allow prisoners to engage with the community in a meaningful way and may limit pro-social learning opportunities.

In regards to the delivery of programs and education within the Tasmanian Prison Service, significant change has occurred and, unfortunately, with the exception of the growth in the Integrated Offender Management Unit, this has not necessarily enhanced prisoner education and learning opportunities. With the increased prisoner numbers leading to overcrowding prior to the development of the new prison complex, security became the dominant focus of staff and management. The opening of the new prison complex has alleviated overcrowding; however, the design of the new prison does not allow sufficient space for learning and education activities to occur (Scurrah, 2008). Research (Scurrah, 2008) highlights the lack of adequate human resources in education and the inadequacy of systems and processes to ensure delivery to a standard expected within the wider community.

In order to meet the demands for the provision of nationally recognized qualifications, the Prisoner Education and Training Unit, located within the old Risdon Prison complex became a Registered Training Organisation in 2002. The purpose of education and vocational training focuses solely on employment and reintegration outcomes and is available only to those with “the need, capacity and ample time in custody...subject to the availability of appropriate courses and resources. Access will be determined by their assessed needs, personal goals and past record in relation to participation and completion of courses” (Department of Justice, 2006, p.1).

In 2007 the Prisoner Education and Training Unit failed its annual audit, revealing that the Registered Training Organisation was non-compliant on all but one of the AQTF standards for continued registration (Tasmanian Qualifications

Authority, 2007). This report notes that there was an absence of training materials, a lack of competent trainers and assessors, along with no evidence of continued professional development and no training and assessment strategies for the delivery of qualifications within their scope (Tasmanian Qualifications Authority, 2007). User choice state-based funding was withdrawn from the Registered Training Organisation for trainees and apprentices at the prison in 2008 (Department of Justice, 2010b), further contributing to a lack of funds available for vocational education and training. By 2009, documentary data reveals that for the prisons Registered Training Organisation there were only 2 completions in Certificate II in Laundry Operations and 4 completions in Certificate II in Hospitality (Right to Information Request, April 10, 2014). Since the demise of the Registered Training Organisation, the Tasmanian Prison Service uses TasTAFE (formerly Skills Tasmania and Tasmania Polytechnic) for the provision of formal vocational education and training to prisoners.

Since 2008 there have been a number of innovative learning programs offered to prisoners in Tasmania. In 2009, there were four projects funded by Skills Tasmania Equity Support Small Grants including a theatre skills workshop, a mural for Ron Barwick Prison during which participants completed a Certificate III in Scaffolding, a barista course for the women's prison and extended to Ron Barwick prison and literacy and numeracy embedded in an art course (Skills Tasmania, 2010). In 2009 in collaboration with Assistance Dogs Australia, the Pups in Prison program was launched, it commenced in 2010 and involved seven prisoners in Ron Barwick Prison (Assistance Dogs Australia, 2009). Other innovative programs include prisoners assisting with the repair of fences after bushfires, refereeing at local football matches and working in community gardens. Unfortunately, programs such as these are only available to a very small and limited number of prisoners. However, one program

which has involved a significantly larger number of prisoners is the ‘Reading Together’ program. This program commenced in 2008 and involves prisoners reading storybooks on to CD which are then sent to their children (Crikey, 2010). The Red Cross also commenced negotiations in 2008 to create prisoner mentors within the Tasmanian Prison Service (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2010) and received funding of \$65,000 from the Tasmanian Community Fund (Tasmanian Community Fund, 2008). The mentoring program delivers to chosen prisoners a Certificate II in Community Services which allows them to take a role as prisoner mentors. The aim of the program is to assist with the reduction of bullying and to reduce attempted suicides and self-harming within prison (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2010).

In the past the Department of Education’s flexible delivery services also provided Year 11 and 12 subjects to prisoners, however, this agreement with the Colleges was ceased in 2014 due to a decision that they were no longer appropriate for the prison population. The Departments’ flexible delivery services is essentially distance education with students receiving written materials and assessments, with no face-to-face component. This type of learning requires self-direction on the part of the learner (Rowntree, 1990) and distance learners are more likely to have insecurities about learning (Knapper, 1988).

4.2.5 Barriers to Learning

There are a wide range of barriers to learning due to the prison environment, for example, it may be difficult for learners to receive the support of teachers or others who may assist with questions about their study, compounding their sense of isolation (Scurrah, 2008). As a result, learning through workbooks and computers may not be an appropriate form of learning for the “many offenders [who] have

learning disabilities, poor literacy and numeracy skills and have experienced early academic failure” which characterise Tasmanian prisoners (Department of Justice, 2009, p.43). Research (Scurrah, 2008) indicates that for prisoners in Tasmania timely contact with teachers is extremely unlikely, that services are limited, resources to assist with the learning materials are often unavailable and in some cases the materials are not suitable to the learners involved. This combination of negative factors may be linked to the low completion rates of prisoner learners.

Whilst enrolment numbers were reported and considered good in a paper presented by prison staff (Koudstaal, Cianchi, Knott, & Koudstaal, 2009), completion rates in 2007 for distance education courses offered at Risdon Prison were 11 per cent and vocational training programs were 6 per cent. Within Tasmania for 2007 the rate of completions for vocational qualifications was approximately 20 per cent (NCVER, 2010), which is considered by researchers to be low (Roberts, 2010).

Unfortunately, around half of Tasmania’s prisoners cannot write competently and around one third cannot read competently, with over 80 per cent never starting or completing senior secondary education (Koudstaal, Cianchi, Knott & Koudstaal, 2009). Thus, there may be a significant step required for prisoners to transition into higher learning, including vocational education and training, given poor high school achievement and poor literacy levels.

Recent upgrades have been made to the prison library service, housed and physically accessible only by Ron Barwick prisoners, along with considerable infrastructure upgrades to prisoner accessible computers through the Risdon LINC project and a partnership between the Department of Education and the Department of Justice (Koudstaal, Cianchi, Knott, & Koudstaal, 2009). Figure 3.4 shows an image of the upgraded library in Ron Barwick prison.

Computers were available to prisoners in the Hobart Remand Centre in 2011, however, they did not have the functionality of being able to connect prisoners to learning resources. Prisoners in medium security units at Risdon Prison also have limited access to computers, however, the focus in these units is work in the prison laundry and working prisoners have very limited time to access computers. Computers can provide a range of learning resources to prisoners, “we delude ourselves if we believe that most everything a teacher normally does can be replicated with greater efficiency by a micro-computer” (Postman, 1985, p. 120). Research has shown that technology enhanced learning initiatives often fail due to the inability for learners to personalize the experience and be self-directed (Chatti, Agustiawan, Jarke & Specht, 2010).

Computers were first introduced into the prison for use by prisoners in 1993 with funds provided by ATSIC for four computers and a laser printer (Evans, 2004), however, by 2001 “there were fewer resources for education than in 1994” (Evans, 2004, p.98). It would appear that there are definite cycles in the provision of education and learning to prisoners in Tasmania.

Lacking a legislated right to education under the current Tasmanian Corrections Act, it may be possible that an individual is denied access to education due to not meeting the required standard of criminogenic need or for behavioural reasons, even if the prisoner is willing and motivated to pursue learning. In addition, a focus on working in prison industries may result in prisoners being denied access to education by prison industry managers. It is possible that education may be withheld as a form of additional punishment by staff, either officially or sub rosa. Without rights enshrined in legislation, education may simply be withheld to the majority of prisoners by individual staff members or through a scarcity of resources or due to an

inability to resource prisoner education. Scarce resources may lead to more selective and exclusive choices, resulting in fewer prisoners being offered the opportunity to participate in learning opportunities.

Interestingly the principles of best practice in education included in the '*Breaking the Cycle*' discussion paper (Department of Justice, 2009, p. 22) make no mention of learner motivation or collaboration with the learner in the development of educational plans. In failing to address this, it may lead to the prisoner being seen as a subject to be trained and tested and for experts to decide what best serves the needs of the individual to address the learners' criminogenic and educational needs, rather than the prisoner being seen as an individual capable of making informed personal choices. Shelton (2007) argues that a "program or system that attempts to deal with inmates on anything but an individual basis will fail most of the time" (p. 117). Without addressing the important variable of learner motivation or discussing the need to collaborate with the learner, two key areas of adult education remain unaddressed.

However, the discussion paper (Department of Justice, 2009) does state that best practice in corrections education includes "provision of education that is built on principles of adult learning" (p. 22). This may indicate that best practices in correctional education would use approaches to learning that are collaborative rather than didactic, and which have an emphasis on equality between the teacher and learner. Some adult learners may resist learning when they feel others are imposing information, ideas or actions on them (Fidishun, 2000).

Wilson and Reuss (2000) argue that "the 'way forward' in prisoner education is better served by considering the empowering potential of education for the prisoners in relation to personal development and growth through learning from choice", providing programs which are "geared to the individual needs of the

individual prisoner” (p. 177). This is in preference to education which is focused on learning outcomes which are evaluated solely on reducing recidivism or improving employment prospects after release. Given the high unemployment rate in Tasmania and the added disadvantage of having a criminal record, steady employment after release is difficult to secure for many prisoners.

4.2.6 Strategy Launch

On Friday, 8th April, 2011 the Minister for Corrections, Nick McKim launched the ‘*Breaking the Cycle: A Strategic Plan for Tasmanian Corrections 2011-2020*’ which included an action plan for 2011-2013.

The mission of the Service remains unchanged, however, it is now supported by a vision which is “reduction in reoffending and an increase in the ongoing safety of the Tasmanian community by providing a safe, secure, humane and effective correctional system with opportunities for rehabilitation, personal development, reintegration and community engagement” (Department of Justice, 2011, p. 5). The full strategy, stakeholder feedback and supporting papers are included in Appendix F.

The strategy has no details on how the actions will be monitored or reported, however, a communication strategy and reporting is part of the overall strategic direction. The document also does not detail how the various partners are to attain sustainable funding to work with the Department of Corrections, or how the actions outlined for within the Service will be financed and budgeted for. The document also does not describe how progress and results will be monitored or reported to the community.

The strategy has a clear focus on education serving the purpose of providing employable skills to prisoners, and here we see the goal of education as being a means

to an end rather than as an end in itself (Swift, 1971). The focus on employment is cast as the key to the simultaneous solving of problems such as “socially acceptable personal identity, secure social position, individual and collective survival, social order and systemic reproduction” (Bauman, 2004, p.11). However, the reality is that employment is difficult to find, and when found, is more likely to be temporary, casual and interspersed with periods of unemployment (Bauman, 2004).

A consistent theme within the strategy is exploring, developing and investigating. There is scarce mention of implementing, monitoring is mentioned only in relation to offenders, and there is little in the way of actions or timelines. It is this which may have led the then Government Opposition spokesperson for Corrections at the time, Ms. Vanessa Goodwin, to state “what this strategic plan does is to outline a program of work for policy officers to explore, review, research and investigate over the next three years while delivering very little” (Johnston, 2011, n.p.).

4.2.7 Strategic Plan for Prison Education

During 2010-11, the Departments of Justice and Education contracted an external provider, *3p Consulting*, to assist them to develop a strategic plan for prison education. The report commences by recognizing the ‘challenges’ inherent in providing education and training within a prison, “these challenges should however, be seen as just that; challenges, not barriers” (Department of Justice, 2011, p. 4).

Despite research (Harding, 2000), which provides evidence that programs are more effective when delivered outside of prison, the report states that “the custodial setting can be an ideal environment and opportunity to influence the educational and employment outcomes of often marginalised individuals”. The report further states that “the primary focus of the plan is on increasing prisoner skill levels and their

capacity to gain employment upon release” (Department of Justice, 2011), highlighting a narrow perspective on education and training. However, the report acknowledges that around 20 per cent of prisoners are unlikely to find and maintain employment, so the focus will also be on literacy, numeracy and ‘life’ skills. The aim is to:

provide all sentenced prisoners, on entry, with a core learning program. From this program, participation would then extend into self-directed learning options supported by an individual learning plan. This shift from the current approach will provide a minimum level of learning support to all prisoners who wish to engage in this option. The strategy ensures learning is relevant, self-directed and linked to an individual pathway plan, developed in partnership with the prisoner and focused on employment and life outcomes on release (p. 4).

The strategy provides an overview of a governance model for the provision of services, a core program of learning available to all prisoners, providing greater access to prisoners sentenced over 6 months, the use of peer literacy tutors and the role of Education and Employment Liaison Officer.

Funding, budgets and responsibility for education and training of prisoners is “ad hoc and is not consolidated” (p. 5), between the Department of Education and Department of Justice. Whilst the materials do not provide accurate figures, it appears that approximately 20,000 hours was provided by Skills Tasmania (now part of TasTAFE) representing around \$500,000 and the Tasmania Prison Service is responsible for the Prison Education and Training Unit at the then cost of \$300,000 per year. There is no core funding model for the provision of prisoner education and training in Tasmania, which “has led to uncertainty and inconsistency in

accountability and resourcing” (p. 11). This is perceived as a key challenge to successful implementation of prisoner education and training. Other key challenges identified in the report include the prison environment, organisational culture and operational policies and procedures. Whilst not acknowledged as barriers to learning, situational, organisational and dispositional barriers were all mentioned in the report.

The vision for education and training within the Tasmania Prison Service is “to reduce recidivism and increase community safety, we provide prisoners across the Tasmanian Prison Service (TPS) with educational and vocational options and employment pathways so they can contribute productively to the Tasmanian community” (p. 7).

In regards to the vision to reduce recidivism in Tasmania, statistics reveal that prisoners released during 2010-11 who returned to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years, 39.1 per cent returned to prison, whilst 50.6 per cent returned to corrective services (Australian Productivity Commission, 2014). The latest figures show that those who return to prison has risen to 44.3 per cent, the highest percentage in the past five years and much closer to the national average of 44.8 per cent (Australian Productivity Commission, 2018).

Table 4.1

Prisoners Released Who Returned to Prison Under Sentence Within Two Years (per cent) (Australian Productivity Commission, 2009, 2014, 2016, 2018)

Year	Tasmania	Australia
2003-04	39.1	39.1
2004-05	37.7	38.8
2005-06	37.2	37.6
2006-07	37.1	37.6
2007-08	36.0	37.6
2008-09	36.4	40.0
2009-10	31.7	38.5
2010-11	36.2	39.8
2011-12	36.4	39.3
2012-13	39.1	40.5
2013-14	39.3	42.9
2014-15	39.9	44.3
2015-16	39.8	44.6
2016-17	44.3	44.8

Focusing on recidivism alone, however, does not indicate that prison and correctional programs are effective or ineffective (Behan, 2007), as behaviour is not only influenced by what was experienced within the prison, but also social contact and the social environment within a community, also significantly affect future criminal acts (Moos, 1975). Poverty, joblessness, family breakdown and a myriad of other factors may be at work to lead a person back to a life of crime (Moos, 1975).

The Strategic Plan document provides an overview of what is perceived as the current strengths of the system. This is largely a series of recent policy and strategy documents which have yet to be successfully actioned or evaluated. The current strengths are seen as the ‘*Breaking the Cycle*’ strategy, the ‘Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan’ and the ‘Tasmania Skills Strategy’. Mentioned as part of the ‘*Breaking*

the Cycle' strategy, one key strength is seen as the commitment of staff to providing a range of learning opportunities.

The timetable for the delivery of the strategy is for full implementation to be completed by 2015, with monitoring and evaluation of a fully implemented trial stage for 2014. By the end of 2014, there was little evidence of successful completion of any of these strategic priorities. A full copy of the report is included in Appendix G.

4.2.8 Delivering Prisoner Activities in Tasmania

The Report on Government Services (2005-2016) captures the following statistical information about time out-of-cells, prisoner employment, and education. Time out-of-cells may not necessarily be linked to pro-social activities in Tasmania, as maximum security enforces time out of cells locking all prisoners in common areas (prisoners must request to return to cell and are then not permitted out until the next meal break) without pro-social activities being made available. However, it does provide for the opportunity to engage in pro-social learning should it be made available. The count of out-of-cell hours excludes periods for regular lock-ins or irregular lock-downs, in excluding these regular and irregular lock ins/downs, in that, it fails to provide an accurate reflection of the lived reality of prison life.

The statistics show a reduction in the out-of-cell hours in 2012-13 to a ten year low of 8.6 hours. The period 2006-2009 delivered the highest out of cell hours when there was an average of 12 hours out of cell. However, since 2009 the rate has remained fairly steady, this may indicate changes in management policy towards a more restrictive regime. The closure of Hayes Prison Farm as an open minimum facility also may be attributed to the more recent drop from 9.2 to 8.6 hours. The impact of lock ins/downs, the number and frequency of these are not reported, is

unknown and may account for an out-of-cell hour figure much lower than the reported 8.6 hours. From 2013-15 the rate rose slightly but remained steady at 9 hours.

Prisoner employment statistics provide information relating to the number of prisoners employed, as a percentage of those eligible to work. This figure does not include prisoners who are short term prisoners, ill, elderly or enrolled in full time education. Peak employment capacity was 70.1% in 2007-08. The majority of prison work in Tasmania is in the service industry rather than commercial industry category. The majority of work is conducted on prison grounds, with work release only occurring irregularly (between zero and 1.5 per cent in most periods, for example, 1.1 per cent in 2010-11, 1.2 per cent in 2011-12). In 2014-15 participation declined to 57.8%.

Overall a sharp decline in participation in prisoner education and training occurred in 2013-2014 with participation dropping to a ten year low of 13.1%. The participation rate for education and training in 2014-2015 was slightly stronger at 16.9% with the national average at 31.6%. The highest period of engagement was 2005-2007. The loss of user choice funding and the suspension of the operation of the internal Registered Training Organisation may have accounted for the sharp decline in the delivery of vocational education in the 2008-09 period. Engagement in pre-certificate level 1 courses has remained steady over the past five years. Secondary education was strong from 2005-2012, although it is no longer offered. Statistics provided by the Department of Justice show that vocational education and training performed very strongly in the period 2009-2011, however, it has performed very poorly since 2011. Higher education performed well in 2007-08, and held relatively steady over the ten-year period, however, it declined sharply in 2009-2011 and since 2012 has been the lowest in ten years.

The 2012-13 Annual Report of the Tasmania Adult Literacy Action Plan states “In 2012-13, 87 inmates had a learning plan developed by the LINC literacy coordinator at Risdon Prison. This cannot be compared with 2011-12 as in that year there was a significant over-reporting of this figure.” (Department of Education, 2013, p.36) The reported figure for the previous year was 283.

Table 4.2

Prisoner Out of Cell Hours, Employment and Education Statistics (Australian

Productivity Commission, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018)

Date	Out of cell hours (average hours per day)	Prisoner employment (% eligible prisoners)	Prisoner education Total (% eligible prisoners)	Pre-certificate 1 level	Secondary	VET	Higher education
2003-04	10.3	68.6	56.5	14.8	9.9	36.8	1.3
2004-05	9.0	52.3	41.8	8.6	12.3	28.2	1.4
2005-06	9.5	53.6	62.2	8.9	19.6	40.2	0.5
2006-07	11.9	57.4	61.8	13.3	24.5	35.6	1.3
2007-08	12.1	70.1	50.5	0	27.2	37.6	2.4
2008-09	12.2	63.7	33.9	6.2	18.3	7.4	2
2009-10	9.5	68.8	46.2	8.7	21.6	84.8	1.9
2010-11	9.5	66.2	52.5	8.9	17.9	75.5	1.8
2011-12	9.2	60.5	28.5	8.5	17.4	11.5	1.0
2012-13	8.6	66.5	25.3	8	13	8	0
2013-14	9.0	67	13.1	6.5	0	7	0.2
2014-15	9.0	57.8	16.9	6.7	0	11.1	0
2015-16	8.6	53.4	14.4	7.3	0	7.5	1.5
2016-17	8.8	59	16	4.8	0	12.3	1.1

4.2.9 The Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services is the largest of the state agencies in Tasmania. They own and manage two prisons in the state, the youth

facility and a secure mental health facility. They also provide health care across all prisons in Tasmania through the Correctional Primary Health Service.

The Ashley Detention Centre was gazetted as a Youth Detention Centre under the Youth Justice Act 1997 and opened in February 2000. It is located near Deloraine in the North West of the state. The Ashley Detention Centre is Tasmania's only youth custodial facility, accommodating young men and women, the majority of whom are aged between 10-17 years, on both remand and detention orders with a 51 bed capacity (Department of Health and Human Services, 2009).

Wilfred Lopes Secure Mental Health Facility, was opened in 2006 and is situated on the Risdon site. It houses individuals with acute mental illness who require specialist mental health inpatient treatment. Patients may include prisoners, people appearing in, or remanded from, Magistrate and Supreme Courts, and those found Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) or Unfit to Plead and placed on a Forensic Order.

4.3 Stakeholders of the Tasmanian Prison Service

I think the stakeholders in Tasmania know what's needed and really it's just a matter of getting on and doing it. I know we are in a difficult budgetary environment at the moment but you know we just need to actually implement something. (Member of Parliament, PL001, 1, August 19, 2011)

Stakeholder theory (Freeman & McVea, 2001) provides insight into the classification of stakeholders and the relationships between different groups with an interest or stake in an organisation. It provides a lens through which the relationships between stakeholders can be analysed and understood (Freeman & McVea, 2001). Stakeholder relationships have been described as a “network of influences”, where

stakeholders have a relationship to each other, as well as, “dyadic ties” between the organisation and each individual stakeholder group (Rowley, 1997, p. 890).

Identification of stakeholders precedes the analysis of the relationships between stakeholders, the use of social network analysis is one way of mapping the relationships between stakeholders (Rowley, 1997).

In the context of this research, stakeholder groups are situated within the community as a whole and comprise government actors including the Tasmanian criminal justice system (police, courts, youth justice and prisons), Tasmanian education system (schools, TAFE’s, Adult and Community Education, and universities), Tasmanian political system (politicians and ministers). Within the community there are also a range of other stakeholders including victims of crime and their families, prisoners and their families, and a range of community organisations which provide services to prisoners.

Stakeholder groups have varied roles to play in both individual prisoners’ lives and within the operation of the Tasmanian Prison Service. Stakeholder perceptions are important because they act to shape and create prisoner learning through the provision of funding, resources and approvals and through the development of policy, processes and the prison regime. The conversations which occur in society and within the corrections field, such as the political need for evaluation to ensure that government funds are seen to be spent wisely, the rise of risk assessments and models, the role of media in driving ‘moral panics’ and the political discourse of getting tough on crime and the rise of neoliberalism, all shape the ways that stakeholders think of prisoners and what they should learn during and from their incarceration experience.

The way that stakeholders are engaged by the Tasmania Prison Service has been characterized as being limited to senior level administration personnel and the Minister (Paterson, 1988). Findings from this present study indicate that this remains true. Documentary data collected for this study highlights the decision-making process as being made at senior levels informed by short reports from front line staff and without engagement with prisoners or other stakeholders. Whilst it may seem beneficial to stakeholders to be dealing with the highest levels of an organisation, in fact, it may be that it is the lower level managers and front-line staff who have the power to implement or block change (Paterson, 1988). In addition, the lack of inclusion of prisoners or their representatives impairs the acceptance of programs and may impact on program sustainability and success.

Attempts to engage stakeholders in strategy development, such as the '*Breaking the Cycle*' plan (Department of Justice, 2011), whilst allowing for discussions with stakeholders, may have little impact on the day-to-day operation of the prison itself, which rests largely with front line staff and their management. Whilst the lack of long range planning within the Service has been perceived as a major issue for prison management, it is likely that staff conservatism and inflexibility, coupled with a political environment which has refused to deal with the industrial climate, has had a greater impact on the effectiveness of the prison service over the past thirty years (Cianchi, 2009; Paterson, 1988). In 2013, the Tasmanian Government released a working paper titled 'Tasmanian Government Framework for Community Engagement' however, it is unclear at the time of this study if this has been rolled out to senior managers and staff within the Tasmania Prison System.

4.3.1 Tasmanian Education System

The Tasmanian education system has recently gone through a period of tumultuous change with two re-organisations of the department in recent years. In the first re-organisation Year 11 and 12 colleges were managed by a division called Academy, whilst the old TAFE system was renamed Polytechnic (Department of Education, 2011). The old Office of Post Compulsory Education was renamed Skills Tasmania and was responsible for planning, regulating and administering the delivery of vocational education and training for Tasmania (Skills Tasmania, 2011). In July 2013 Skills Tasmania and Tasmania Polytechnic were merged to form TasTAFE (Department of Education, 2013).

The Department of Education also has responsibility for the Adult and Community Education sector operating in Tasmania, along with Libraries and Online Access Centres (rebranded as LINC), all of which are managed by the Community Knowledge Network. The Community Knowledge Network provides literacy coordinators who work with teams of trained volunteers to provide one-to-one support to improve literacy skills throughout the community. In 2011, three literacy coordinator positions were created to work within the Department of Justice, one for the prison and two to work with Community Corrections (one in the north and one in the south of the state) (Department of Justice, 2011).

TasTAFE provides teachers who attend the prison to deliver vocational education, literacy and art classes. Prisoners are not able to access face-to-face education outside of the prison (or even in different sections of the prison) unless a Section 42 leave pass is granted by prison management. The requirements of these

passes are outlined in Sections 41 and 42 of the Corrections Act of Tasmania, which can be a complicated and lengthy process for some prisoners.

In the past, Year 11 and 12 education and some vocational education have been delivered through an open learning education function which provides resources as text-based lessons and activities through the Department of Education. Despite the strategic plan outlining access as the first strategic priority and the increased provision of TCE subjects being a part of that priority, the provision of Year 11 and 12 through Colleges and the Flexible Delivery Services ceased in early 2014. An updated progress report (September, 2012) is provided in Appendix H, and outlines the initial strategic priorities and an outline of the progress which was completed throughout 2011 – 2012, although as detailed above some of those strategic priorities have changed.

Medium security units house the majority of prisoners in Tasmania, yet they have only had a commercial laundry as a source of education or skill development. Work in the laundry service requires prisoners to be strip searched twice a day. However, at the present time it is correct that there is nothing offered to prisoners in maximum units in regards to education. Also, it is unknown for how long prisoners in these units will be without access to the exercise oval.

4.3.2 Tasmanian Prison Service Staff

there is a lot of militancy among prison officers... they don't want any change because this is how it runs, you know and this is always a problem in big organisations, it's always a problem when you bring in qualified skilled managers from outside because you get that natural 'we don't want them here' attitude (Police officer, PO004, 1, August 17, 2011)

A central and important stakeholder of the Tasmanian Prison Service is the staff of the Service. The staff consist of four main groups – uniformed officers, management, non-uniformed administration and non-uniformed professional staff. The Tasmanian Prison Service has been described as a bureaucratic paramilitary organisation, the structure of which encourages the continuation of traditional corrections practices (Paterson, 1988). Whilst it is important to acknowledge the presence of exceptional prison officers, it is likely that their effectiveness may be hampered by colleagues who are resistant to embrace new ways of working and which may adversely impact on the operation of the prison service (Cianchi, 2009). A lack of public scrutiny, the political spin of deflecting responsibility and a media focused mostly on sensational events, combine to ensure that while occasionally “cosmetic changes are made. Invariably such innovations give way to the practice best understood by the majority of those who work in the system – custody” (Paterson, 1988, p. 259), rather than care and rehabilitation. “When things become difficult, we often retreat to the old and trusted ways of doing prison work, despite their obvious limitations and negative consequences” (Cianchi, 2009, p.19).

Cianchi (2009) argues that within the Tasmanian context “that means a return to an over-reliance on static security and an oppressive regime that sees humane treatment and rehabilitation as luxuries rather than integral to prison life” (p. 68). Unfortunately, the historical practice of hiring officers with a very low base level of education, hampers acceptance of programs for prisoners, the communication of ideas and the implementation of change within the prison service (Paterson, 1988). Similarly, Cianchi (2009) argues that it is possibly those officers who enter the service for reasons of pay, employment stability and working conditions rather than having a genuine interest in the social work aspects of the role, who are ultimately

less likely to be effective in the current environment. However, it may be that disillusionment (Cianchi, 2009; Paterson, 1988), the unwillingness of management to dismiss staff during the probation period (Paterson, 1988) or the passing on of prejudices and practices which occurs between new and old staff (Patterson, 1988) which may result in the ineffectiveness of officers. Since the 1980's the Service has had a focus on a change in working styles to move the service from a custody model, to having a greater focus on the care of prisoners (Paterson, 1988). However, this change in the ways of working had not previously been supported by a clear performance management or training system.

Paterson (1988) argues that the increased need to use decision making, conflict resolution skills and interpersonal skills has been delayed by the length of service of prison officers, the degree of conservatism evident within both prison service managers and staff, and official and operative goals evident within the Service. It is also possible that the reliance on specialist staff for the provision of care may result in a lack of skill and a lack of focus in the training of corrections officers. Indeed, Paterson (1988) argues that officer training may be viewed as a way of keeping up the appearance of change to external stakeholders, whilst concentrating on the more important and central goals of confinement and security (Paterson, 1988). This analysis of the Service, now thirty years on, has proved accurate. Unfortunately, this has significant effects on the delivery of learning, both formal and informal, within the Tasmanian Prison Service. If prison officers are not supportive of learning opportunities then it is likely that will not work to motivate prisoners to engage in learning (Scurrah, 2008).

Paterson (1988) further argues that the impetus for change within the service must be forced through external political pressure. A continuing theme in prison

management in Tasmania is the issue of reluctance of any change by uniformed staff such that “any approach by management to ‘humanise’ inmate conditions is met with claims that prison authorities are more concerned with those who have broken the law” (Paterson, 1988, p.140), than with officer’s needs. This reluctance to change has been noted in Parliament with the previous Minister Nick McKim stating that there are some officers who “will stop at nothing to prevent positive change from occurring in the Tasmanian prison system” including the theft of internal documents and their release to the media (Hansard, 8/3/2011). He further states that “the unions threatened an indefinite, illegal lock-down of RPC maximum and medium security unless they got their way...the unions need to understand that they do not run Tasmania's prisons; I do as Minister and I accept that responsibility. I will do what I need to do to protect human rights obligations and ensure that we deliver under the Tasmanian Corrections Act” (Hansard, 8/3/2011).

4.3.3 Unions

“It’s 20 years of neglect...where the unions run the show for their own selfish reasons and have turned the workplace into a roort.” (Legal sector worker, LS001, 1, June 17, 2011)

Paterson (1988) argues that it seems paradoxical that on the one hand union leaders support professionalization of the service yet “resist any attempt to involve their membership in any interaction with inmates that calls for a more humanitarian approach” (p. 140). The inability of prison management to dismiss or discipline staff results in a lack of legitimate or coercive power, which managers may be able to harness to ensure that work is done in a professional manner (Paterson, 1988). The result of a lack of management power to discipline staff is that staff may come to

recognize the union as the “defacto controller of the prison” largely due to the militancy of the union to take a confrontational approach to all management directives and change programs (Paterson, 1988, p. 216). This is evident in the recent spate of industrial action concerning changes to standard operating procedures.

A Parliamentary Inquiry was held into the issue of overtime costs in 2013, due to a number of issues, including the manipulation of the call back system by officers to force the use of overtime (Parliament of Tasmania, 2013). For example, corrections officers may call in sick to ensure others are called in on rostered days off at overtime rates (Paterson, 1988). This system which has been abused by staff for their own financial benefit since the early 1980’s has been subject to numerous internal investigations (Paterson, 1988). Unfortunately, in the past it has been the length of service enjoyed by prison officers, the militancy of the union and the lack of political will to upset the industrial situation at the prison, which has negated management attempts at disciplinary dismissal; allowing for the continued abuse of sick leave and the call back system. This has directly led to budget blowouts, the increasing cost of warehousing prisoners and a poor record in regards to the human rights of prisoners (Paterson, 1988). To address this issue, in 2010 KPMG was hired by the Government to analyse absence management issues within the Department of Justice. The report indicates that the Prison Service employed 298 full time equivalent (FTE) staff members, a total of 298 FTE employees had charged overtime and that an average of 424.3 hours of overtime per employee which equates to approximately 53 days per employee. Over the two-year period the report found prison staff were permitted 29.7 sick leave days per employee (KPMG, 2010).

4.3.4 Prisons and Politics in Tasmania

The Prison Service itself is subject to management by the Minister, a politically appointed figure. The blame culture which operates within the Tasmanian political system allows current office holders to lay blame for inadequacies within the prison to be allocated to previous office holders (Paterson, 1988). This allows for deniability of responsibility for the situation that the prison service is in. In 2011 there was a Labor and Green coalition in place, and the Minister for Corrections was Nick McKim, the leader of the Greens Party. He was replaced as Minister four weeks before the pending 2014 election due to the dissolution of the coalition arrangement. The Labor party had been in power in Tasmania since 1998 and lost power to a majority Liberal government in the 2014 election.

4.3.5 Prisoners' family and friends

Prisoners' families and friends continue to play an important role in the lives of many prisoners and are thus key stakeholders to the Tasmanian Prison Service. They are an important source of motivation for prisoners to engage in learning (Golding, 2002; Moeller, Day, & Rivera, 2004), particularly if that learning enables them to stay connected and engage with family (Scurrah, 2008). This type of learning is highly valued by prisoners and includes literacy and poetry writing, parenting and relationship skills, and hobbies and crafts through which gifts can be created for family (Scurrah, 2008). Prison has an enormous impact on the lives of prisoners' families who suffer the "largely invisible punishments" which result from our current criminal justice system (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002, p.1). Their relationships with their loved ones are controlled and monitored, they have no rights in relation to privacy or intimacy (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002).

Prisoners' families are often troubled by feelings of shame and humiliation and the stigma of incarceration over shadows their lives (Braman, 2002). Anxiety is often persistent and is accompanied by feelings of powerlessness at being unable to assist their loved one for fear of reprisals from the prison, "prison worries" are faced daily by prisoners' families (Braman, 2002, p.119).

4.3.6 Victims of crime

Having dealt with lots of victims and victims of some pretty serious crime, generally I don't think they take any great pleasure in someone going to jail. I guess what they want is to see the justice system in society has held someone accountable for what they have done. (Police officer, PO004, 1, August 17, 2011) and

I think most victims want people to go to jail. Invariably they are disappointed by the ultimate penalty. My experience is that they want them to go to jail. I don't know if they really know what that means but they just want them out of sight, out of mind. If they don't go to jail, they think the system has failed them and often I do too, but really going to jail is just a block in time when they are not out doing stuff, doing bad stuff. It's just a block in time; you know it's not the end of their offending, generally. I have been doing this for 18 years, I can't think of many I can't think of many that have really gone on and made anything of themselves after they have been significant offenders; you have got to be a significant offender to go to jail in the first place. People think you do bad, you go to jail; that's not the case. You do fifty [crimes] and if you got caught at 50, you probably done 500 [crimes]. (Police officer, PO001, 1, July 7, 2011)

and

we are still driven as a society by this whole revenge mentality, it's tragic but it's there and I think as a system we need to move beyond that and we need to actually be therapeutic and target what needs to be done in order to fix the problem so that the problem goes away, that actually should be our overriding priority and it never has been and you see this in actually staff on the ground at the prison, we still see this punitive approach where people should be locked up, that they deserve to be treated badly, they are there to be punished and it's really unhelpful for our whole society, it creates the greater likelihood of more victims and all of us, presumably on both sides of the fence, want to have fewer victims, that should be our driver (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, August 17, 2011)

Garland (2001) highlights the recent rise in focus of the victim in criminal justice policy, where the interests of victims are invoked to support increased social control and penal responses to crime. He argues that it has become a political imperative to highlight the suffering of victims as a means to sell the 'tough on crime' mandate. The experience of the victim "is taken to be common and collective, rather than individual and atypical" (p. 11) where the "sympathy invoked by political rhetoric centred exclusively on the victim and the fearful public" (p. 102). Increasingly the focus is on this politicized image of the victim and the rhetoric which surrounds this image, rather than on the actual opinions and wishes victims (Garland, 2001). Similarly, officers unions may use victims of crime in a similar manner to bolster their image and manufacture an alliance with victims, whilst the media use retributive victims groups for comments that sell their product (Page, 2008). A comment on The Mercury website argues that "We jump up and down about the

rights of victims every time there are problems at the prison, without accepting that we as the community will pay the costly price of not fixing the prison system, with more tax payer dollars spent on sending more people to an anti-social setting that multiplies the risk of there being many more victims to come. Posted by: Time for Culture Change at the Prison of Hobart 1:36pm Tuesday” (The Mercury, 22/2/11)

What victims deserve, rather than being used as political puppets, is for their voice to be heard, “all too often the emotional needs of the victim are forgotten in the criminal justice process” (White, 2008, p. 18). An important part of the rehabilitation of prisoners is to develop an understanding of the harm that their offending has caused to their victims and the community, these moral lessons can be supported by victims of crime (White, 2008). In Tasmania there has been little use of victim mediation, group conferencing or victim panels within adult corrections approaches. However, there have been proposals put forward in recent years to include a victims of crime representative on the Parole Board.

4.3.7 Tasmania Police Service

“They often get picked on from the police or scrutinized by the police because they are known” (Community Corrections staff, CC005, 1, June 22, 2011) and

you will see with those what they call generational crime families those kids are taught to hate the police basically from the moment they can walk, you know and parents often say when we go to search their houses, don’t talk to the fucking police (Police officer, PO004, 1, August 17, 2011) and

When the crooks are locked up they are not committing crime and we have got charts, figures that just show you how effective that is for us, for society as a whole. There are some people that if they are outside, they will commit a

crime; when they are inside, they don't. (Police Officer, PO002, 1, July 27, 2011)

Conflict theory portrays the police “as key mechanisms in the control of subordinate groups and in the protection of dominant group interests” (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999, p. 495). It could be argued that effective policing relies on the individual officer’s ability to differentiate as “difference is an initial indicator for police interest” (Findlay, 2004a, p. 115). Social class is one of the ways in which we, as individuals, differ.

Choongh (1998) argues that police employ an informal objective of their role as enforcer of social discipline through the use of punishment, shaming and the demand for submissiveness predominantly from the underclass and working-class groups of society. The underclass is viewed as being innately criminal and anti-authoritarian. The main purpose for the use of social discipline is to remind the individual that they are under constant surveillance and control. The social disciplinary model is the product of a policing system which believes that it is efficient and acceptable to identify the ‘criminal classes’ who reject the prevailing norms of society and subject them to control regardless of whether they are violating any criminal law. Choongh (1998) asserts that the message from the police “is that challenge, resistance, and a lack of respect, like criminal infractions, will incur punishment, even if that punishment has to be imposed through an informal, police administered system of ‘justice’” (p. 633). This argument is further supported by McAra and McVie (2005) who contend that police working rules and practice support the use of the social disciplinary model with certain groups becoming a ‘permanent suspect population’, particularly those who have previous convictions or those who keep the ‘wrong’ company. Additionally, they reported that the use of police

discretion can create a form of discipline “that appears to elide moral status with affluence” (p. 27). Dress, physical appearance and the deferential manner afforded police are suggested as possible differentiators in how police assign a class label to young people. “The police in this context act less as legal subjects and more as class subjects—enforcing urban discipline, labelling and keeping under surveillance a group of permanent suspects” (p. 28). A recent example of this type of discretionary policing was the random breath testing after the Tasmanian Falls Festival, a music event popular with youth and working class groups, which prompted comments by the community concerning the fact that events which are attended predominantly by capitalist classes (such as the Taste of Tasmania and music events held at vineyards) have not been subjected to similar policing strategies (The Mercury, 2009).

The use of the social discipline model by police highlights the role that police discretion can have on shaping the discrimination which exists throughout the criminal justice system on the working class, particularly the underclass. These classes are vulnerable to the criminalization of their behaviours and have less power (White & Habibis, 2005). Selective enforcement within the criminal justice system, which is accepted due to the need for efficiency, relies on discretionary policing. Those who are disrespectful or disobedient are treated differently and this can create social division. Policing in Australia relies and is founded on the morality, prejudices and culture of white, capitalist class Australians and, as such, police attitudes to social morality are shaped by the work ethic morality resulting in the targeting of the unemployed and unemployable sections of the community. Over policing of the poor and socially disadvantaged is a feature of Australian policing (Findlay, 2004a).

The mission of the Tasmanian Police Service is simply to make Tasmania safe, this fails to address the questions, safe for whom and from what? It can be

argued that social control, as applied by the police force, is not applied uniformly and universally across the whole of the community for the benefit for all of its members, rather it is applied to certain groups for the benefit and protection of other groups (Edwards, 1988).

4.3.8 Media

[After investigating issues we have] found all the same problems, decried them because it's appalling, there is a big splash in the media about how dreadful is it, departmental response saying yes, yes it's dreadful, we will deal with that and then nothing until the next [riot or disaster] (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, August 17, 2011) and

Literally twenty years ago, we had a director who engaged with the media, he was on the road, he was in the paper, he was a welfare trained person from way back and he put the other side, he would argue the case...when you explain stuff to people, they get it...we have not had that level of interaction with the public. So what happens, you know the right wing press gets hold of stuff and they just run with it, and it shifts the whole tone of the population (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, August 17, 2011) and

Let's be blunt, there are some really stupid people out there who don't understand that if you treat people badly, they will get worse, and it amazes me the intellectual porosity of the debate on various newspaper websites and within the community about prisons, it's extraordinary. (Legal worker, LS01, 1, June 17, 2011)

Wortley (2002) argues that the media has a large influence on how crime and punishment is viewed by the community and the businesses that control the media are

likely to have a vested interest in promoting particular views to the community. It is likely that news organisations have an interest in maintaining current power relations and are not likely to desire or foster radical change in social structures. Thus, the media has a tendency to focus news narratives on street crime stemming from individuals who are mad or bad or in specific subgroups of the community. Similarly, Faith and Jiwani (2002) argue that the media prefer explanations of crime which make 'common sense', which often support the dominant ideology. Wortley (2002) argues that the media propose solutions to crime which are focussed on greater social control and police powers. This serves to reinforce the relationship between the media and police, which is vital to the journalist's access to crime information (McGovern, 2009). In a similar fashion, when there is a crisis in a prison, either real or perceived, media attention allows prison workers to highlight to the community the peril and dangerousness of their jobs and their need for better pay and working conditions (Faith and Jiwani, 2002).

Tasmania's media consists of three major newspapers (The Mercury, The Examiner, and The Advocate), many local radio stations and two local television channels, along with national media, the internet and a range of social media (such as Twitter and Facebook). Tasmania has been part of the National Broadband Network roll out providing superfast internet in a number of communities and even in many remote communities there is access to free internet through the Community Knowledge Network.

Sussman (2002) argues that the media plays an important role within our community of enabling public scrutiny of our government institutions. However, there is a secretiveness inherent within prison systems which makes this public scrutiny difficult. Whilst part of this secrecy is both a covert and overt mechanism

used by the prison service and the wider government to avoid scrutiny, part of the blame must also lie with the media services themselves who “have often indulged in distortion and self-censorship in their coverage of crime, prisons, and prisoners, sometimes in response to presumed demands of the marketplace” (Sussman, 2002, p. 258).

In Tasmania, media coverage of the prison system and prisoners tends to be polarized, on the one hand there is sensationalist coverage of prison riots and stereotypical representations of ‘mad and bad’ prisoners and on the other hand there are feel good stories and officially sanctioned positive images and press releases.

4.4 Summary

The available research consistently highlights the disparity between the reality of practice and the rhetoric of policy statements and guidelines which is further reinforced by the inadequacy of resources devoted to prisoner learning. When combined with a discourse focused on recidivism and addressing offending behaviour, there is likely to be a narrowing view of prisoner learning which may result in resources being made available primarily to activities which purport to provide a ‘scientific evidence base’ linked to recidivism. Despite the reliance on the risk/needs paradigm and the programs which are developed based on the idea that dynamic risk factors can be ‘fixed’, research has yet to demonstrate that this process leads to offenders desisting from crime (Porporino, 2010). It is also apparent that learning in prison is increasingly centred on principles of return on investment, cost benefit analysis and vocational learning, largely ignoring liberal and critical education discourses. By not focusing on the goals and needs people have for themselves and instead prescribing interventions for their ‘own good’ and for the reduction of risk to

the wider community, it is possible that not only will people be unmotivated to change but that they will be denied the resources needed to create those life changes in their own ways. It is likely that “in order for individuals to desist from offending they should be given the knowledge, skills, opportunities and resources to live a “good” life, which takes into account their particular preferences, interests and values” (Ward & Maruna, 2007, p. 111).

Chapter 5

Learning behind the prison fence

The majority of pro-social learning has to do with family, friends, workplace, social, education, support, recreational, and cultural links. As soon as you cut those in a prison system the probability of pro-social learning drops to about ten per cent. So of all the things to do, the ability to maintain connectivity with positive settings, educational support, cultural arts, learning, employment is absolutely critical. (Community Services sector staff, CS007, 1, September 15, 2011)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will commence with a literature review based on the research question, it will then present the findings based on the data and discuss them.

5.2 Literature review: What do Prisoners Learn During Incarceration?

“Prisons give people the opportunity for learning how to commit other crimes” (Williams, 2008, p. 427). This is not a new notion, for example, Sutherland (1939) argued that people learned criminal behaviour in association with others and that deviant behaviour is more likely if individuals are exposed to these types of behaviours.

Socio-cultural theories of crime argue that criminal behaviour is learned in close association with others (Schissel, 2002). Similarly, Narey (1999) states that prison has provided some people with an education on how to engage in criminal activities, as well as removing the support that may have assisted others to desist.

The lives of prisoners are subject to continual social control within the prison environment. When the effect of control is successful, it shapes people’s attitudes, beliefs, values and actions, either reinforcing existing patterns or changing them (Edwards, 1988). Prisoners, based on the moral code of society, are given a status as ‘deviant’ and ‘offender’. As such, the community may feel justified in subjecting them to wide ranging forms of social control, “social control is whatever society deems appropriate for dealing with deviance, and it is both justified by and a necessary element of the moral order” (Edwards, 1988, p. 4).

For those prisoners who are able to access pro-social learning opportunities in prison, Legge (1978) states that programs can be used as another form of social control and behaviour modification by prison authorities. The punishment of prison is not simply the removal of freedom but also constitutes the psychological effects of the prison environment (Johnson & Toch, 1982). In addition, it may also include further

punishment in the form of social control or ‘interventions’ such as programs aimed at changing people’s behaviour.

Whenever we use such terms as persuade, restrain, discipline, coerce, penalize, reward, direct, manage or regulate to describe aspects of the activities of individuals, groups, organisations or society, we are talking about the exercise of social control over people’s bodies, minds and behavior. (Edwards, 1988, p. 1).

In order for prisoners to survive prison they need to adapt to their new environment; this is referred to as the effect of prisonization. Bukstel and Kilman (1980) describe prisonization as a method of adapting to the prison environment, an enculturation process, which results in prisoners taking on the culture and ways of the prison. It involves adopting behaviours and attitudes which are unsuitable to life outside of the prison environment. The meta-analysis showed that in regard to social learning of criminal behaviours, that not only did prisoners learn anti-social and criminal skills from each other, but when these behaviours were displayed, they were reinforced by peers and that mitigating strategies used by staff were ineffectual. The prison experience may also contribute to the loss of pro-social networks and the replacement of these with anti-social networks formed during imprisonment (Goulding, Hall & Steels, 2008).

Social control, while it may not be formally recognized within a learning environment, may form part of the ‘hidden curriculum’ (Angus, 1986). The hidden curriculum is the transmission of particular norms and values, usually those of the dominant culture, throughout the educational environment. Within a prison environment the curriculum is what is officially available to prisoners in regards to formal and approved learning opportunities, overt forms of social control may form

part of a curriculum, for example in criminogenic programs, or it may be a covert part of the learning and thus part of the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum links structures of education to structures of society and in doing so reinforces the rules of social order and the system of status and hierarchy (Angus, 1986).

Garland (1990) argues that prisons communicate meaning, not only about punishment and crime, but also about social relations, power, morality and legitimacy; that it is a social institution, influenced by public opinion. Liebling (2004) asks “without respect, dignity, or fairness, how is ‘personal development’ possible?” (p. 166).

One definition of social control is “the utilization of various mechanisms and techniques to discourage, restrict, prevent, divert, or otherwise the behavior of those who constitute an actual or potential threat or problem for the majority” (Edwards, 1988, p. 4). Some prisoners exert their own influence on other prisoners’ lives, altering their behaviour and values, through forms of social control in a variety of ways. Thus, the influence of a pro-criminal culture within the prison environment may alter the behaviour of prisoners, creating criminogenic effects of prison and a ‘school of crime’.

On the other hand, Weatherburn (2010), states that the ‘jury is still out’ in regards to the criminogenic effects of the prison experience. Weatherburn (2010) states:

despite the vast sums of taxpayers’ money spent on prison every year, we know very little about its effect on re-offending and crime. We do not know whether the apparent criminogenic effect observed in many studies (including this one) is genuine effect. (p. 10).

This lack of research poses “a serious impediment to the development of effective policy” (Weatherburn, 2010, p.10). Even when research has been conducted and highlights the criminogenic effect of prison, proposed solutions may not be operationalised.

The norms and values that drive the culture of a prison influence the perceptions of prisoners towards education, influence the availability of resources, affect learner motivation and affect the learning experience. Operational and structural issues, a strong focus on working in prison industries, staff attitudes and lower pay for prisoner students, create the perception among prisoners that learning is not valued by the prison system or by the community (Anderson, 1989; Bearing Point, 2003; Braggins & Talbot, 2003; Golding, 2002; Hughes, 2004).

Liebling (2004) argues that prison conditions are significantly influenced by the messages which front line staff receive from those around them, including managers, government ministers, friends, their families and the media. Along with ideas about the treatment of prisoners which focus on their human rights and their need for rehabilitation, there are often competing messages about hyper security, risk aversion, control and sometimes anti-social and over regulating ideas. “Civic values are, paradoxically, deeply relevant to the prison condition” (Liebling, 2004, p. xix). Chen and Shapiro (2007) assert that “harsher imprisonment conditions do not reduce recidivism” (p. 4).

Rutherford (1993) describes three, often conflicting, working credos within corrections, punishment which focuses on moral condemnation and the degradation and dislike of ‘offenders’, efficiency which focuses on smooth administration and management, and care which focuses on open and accountable procedures, humanitarian and inclusive practices. Liebling (2004) states that in more recent times

an ‘effectiveness’ credo can be seen focusing on the delivery of reasonable standards and ensuring compliance through “a mixture of control, incentives, disincentives and legitimate (but not indulgent) treatment” (p. 35). This is coupled with focused criminogenic programs structured to challenge, rather than understand, anti-social thinking and behaviour. The focus under this credo is to replace “recreational education with evidence based basic skills courses” (p. 35) and to focus on the best value of resources, links with other agencies to maximize the effectiveness of corrections practices and to develop standards and accreditations. It is possible that all credos may be operating in a single institution in different ways and through different stakeholder groups, informing the hidden curriculum and influencing prisoner learning. This can serve to create conflicting cultures within the prison organisation, resulting in confused policy and practice.

De Maeyer (2008) states that prison “is a place where prisoners unlearn many things; how to organise a budget, meals, their time, space, intimacy, relations with people of the other sex” (p. 20). At the same time, prison educators feel that the public demands them to provide more than their peers educating on the outside, often with less resources (De Maeyer, 2008).

Prison has been referred to as a costly way of making criminals worse (Home Office, 1991). Johnson (1996) states prisoners “typically learn little of value during their stint behind bars” (p. x1), however, prisoners “can learn something of value: how to deal with pain and loss in mature ways...and learn to cope more responsibly with the many pressures and constraints found in prison and the free world alike” (p. 4). He argues that for the majority of prisoners the experience is one of wasted time in an environment that is inhumane, where a prisoner’s potential is squandered. He states that “prisoners should be free to make choices within the prison world that have

meaningful implications for the quality and character of the lives they will lead behind bars and, ultimately, upon release” (p.10).

Prisoners, depending on how staff view their ‘readiness’, their classification and the prison regime in which they are housed, may be able to access education and a range of programs and resources enabling them to learn pro-social skills which may contribute to positive personal change. These may include access to formal education at all levels, vocational education and training, criminogenic and therapeutic programs, cultural programs, religious programs, peer mentoring programs, library services, information technology services, physical education programs, cultural and recreation programs and health programs.

The literature (see for example, MacKenzie, 2006; Aos, Miller & Drake, 2006; Davis, et. al., 2013; Hall, 2015) reveals a variety of evaluations and assessments of these services, particularly in relation to the reduction of crime. Martinson’s (1974) summary of ‘nothing works’, in regards to the rehabilitation of offenders, contributed to a proliferation of ‘evidence based’ analysis. MacKenzie (2006) provide a meta-analysis of 284 studies, focussing on a wide variety of program types, which shows that academic education, cognitive behavioural therapy programs and vocational education do reduce recidivism; however, for prison industries and life skills education results were inconclusive. This work built on the previous meta-analysis work (Wilson, Gallaher & MacKenzie, 2000) which looked at the results of 33 studies of correctional education programs. MacKenzie (2006) stated that, at the time, there was a lack of sufficient significant robust empirical research. However, this is being slowly remedied and a number of subsequent meta-analysis of existing research have been undertaken which support the findings of earlier research (Aos, et.al., 2006; Davis, et.al., 2013; Hall, 2015). The research by Davis et.al. (2013) built on the

previous work and analysed a total of 58 studies focussing on academic and vocational training programs. This research also looked beyond recidivism as an outcome and found that employment outcomes for prisoners who participated in education were improved. This growing body of research informs correctional policy and provides evidence of the ability of education to reduce recidivism.

The relationships between staff and prisoners, the use of individual sentence plans and case management can all influence both the prison environment and informal learning in positive ways (Cherry, 2005). Cherry (2005) argues that through the prison experience prisoners may learn a range of survival skills, for example, dealing with boredom, loneliness, aggression, and relating to different people, all skills which may be useful and relevant to living a crime free life in society. However, it is unclear if any of these skills assist people to live a life free from crime once they are released (Porporino, 2010).

Learning may also occur through working in prison, excluding maximum security, Risdon Prison is a very work focused prison (Scurrah, 2008). The development of social skills, a work ethic and routine are some of the positive learning which occurs in prison industries (Scurrah, 2008). However, for the majority, the work itself was considered dull and few stakeholders felt that prisoners learned skills which would be useful upon release, particularly if there was no link to nationally recognized qualifications (Scurrah, 2008). It is argued that the culture within prison industries is negative (Douglas, 2001) and prisoner workers are unmotivated, often learning poor work habits which would not support employment in a 'real world' environment (Scurrah, 2008). When the work options available to prisoners lacks meaning, learning opportunities and is poorly paid, serving only to

further punish, it “reinforces the view that crime is more exciting and pays better” (Crook, 2007, p. 305).

Crook (2007) suggests that prison work should provide “real work experience for a real employer” (p. 306), which would be more effective in increasing self-esteem and securing work after release. Crook (2007) argues that the prison service should pay prisoners in the same way a normal employer would, including paying a living wage, allowing the prisoner to pay tax and accumulate superannuation, rather than on a cash basis. “Prisons are effectively supporting the notion that the State sanctions the informal economy. This is particularly inappropriate as there are prisoners who have been convicted for exactly this offence” (Crook, 2007, p. 303). Work should not be compulsory or ‘forced’ and prisoners who work in prison should be covered by workers compensation insurance, and legal remedies should apply as they would in the community (Sisters Inside, n.d.).

The delivery of vocational education and training within prison workplaces has been researched in Australia (see Dawe, 2007) revealing positive outcomes such as recidivism and employment for prisoners. However, the research also highlights the need for change in the mindset of employers and the community about the employability of formerly incarcerated persons and the need for improvements to the delivery of vocational education and training within a prison environment.

Learning can also develop political dimensions, Brooks (2002) states that in the United States during the 1960’s “prisoners began to educate themselves and organize to challenge the criminal justice system” (p. 30). There is a long history of intellectual resistance of prisoners who have written about their incarceration such as Wole Soyinka, Alexander Solzenhitzen, Angela Davis and, more recently in Australia, Debbie Kilroy and Craig Minogue. Along with this, there is also the

emergence of convict criminology which provides an ethnographic and ‘lived experience’ view of the prison (Ross & Richards, 2002). ‘However, it has been noted that there is an inherent conflict in regards to academic culture, which values critical thinking, and prison culture, which values subservience to total authority (Banks, 2003). This clash of cultures may make it difficult for prisoners to express and explore their new learning within the prison environment.

Prisoners learn significant amounts about the criminal justice system, its processes and the concept of how justice is done, through their involvement in the system (Scurrah, 2008). Prisoners become knowledgeable about the ways in which the system works and this can create the conditions for political action. Prison can become a political space and provide a real-life education which enables “people to realize that, in a real democracy, power has to be responsive to the needs, hopes, and desires of citizens and other inhabitants” (Giroux, 2009. p. 65). However, political action is rarely supported in an environment which values subservience to authority and prisoners may be penalised for participating in or discussing such issues.

The majority of research undertaken on prisoner learning focusses on the formal programs which are offered to prisoners through education, criminogenic programs and work, usually through the lens of prisoners or trainers. With the exception of Braggins and Talbot (2005), which explores the views of corrections officers, in the databases searched no research could be found into the views of stakeholders who are external to the prison environment, such as police, politicians, lawyers, about what prisoners learn during incarceration.

5.3 Findings

The majority of stakeholders believe that there are opportunities for people in prison to learn both pro-social and anti-social knowledge and behaviours whilst they are incarcerated.

5.3.1 Culture of the Prison Environment

The culture of the prison environment affects both staff and prisoners, for example: *“I think it’s a culture where everybody starts acting like each other and there’s not a whole lot of separation between the two. I’m not saying everybody does that but I have noticed it in some of my visits”* (Community Services sector staff, CS001, 1, April 29, 2011),

and,

People in authority, who are obviously committing crimes, then it’s still OK, it’s just a matter of, just don’t get caught... why would you respect authority if authority has let you down your entire life and then you see them behaving like other people? It kind of reinforces that lack of respect for the system (Community Corrections staff, CC001, 1, May 25, 2011).

Others felt excluded and victimized by prison officers, for example, *“I don’t go to Risdon, it’s a horrible place, mainly because of the prison guards”* (Department of Education staff, ED003, 1, October 10, 2011)

and,

We’ve been hassled and we’ve both felt frightened by correctional officers on more than one occasion, really, really frightened a couple of times, and just a bit frightened other times, and annoyed other times. Very few of them come across as really caring... they ignore us when we walk in, so what’s their

role? It's just to stand around and open doors and to eat lots of toast and drink lots of cups of tea. It's terrible but seriously I'd say that ninety per cent of the correctional officers that I've met in 5 years, or whatever it is, are just – are there to do just that, like it's a job?... Often we think, well if they treat us like that, how do they treat the prisoners? They must treat them bad, if not worse... The key challenge that I see for our role is to get in there and out of there without being abused from a correctional officer (Department of Education staff, ED006, 1, October 2, 2012).

5.3.2 Criminogenic Effects of Prison

Given the lack of confidence in the prison system reported by the majority of participants in regards to the provision of education and rehabilitative activities, many stakeholders felt that the prison experience had a strong criminogenic effect. Stakeholders believe that prisoners experience more anti-social learning, through other prisoners and prison staff, than pro-social learning. The following quotes from participants highlight what stakeholders perceive in regards to the quality and quantity of appropriate learning opportunities. For example, Community Corrections staff stated:

“Most of them say they haven't had the opportunity to undertake programmes... Often they come out having done nothing you know, even after years of being in there” (Community Corrections staff, CC010, 1, July 27, 2011) and,

I think people go in and they are sent back out without ever having changed so I don't see how the way that helps society at all and I think that again there is really an opportunity to really educate people and to help people and that

opportunity is not being taken. (Community Corrections staff, CC005, 1, June 22, 2011).

Education staff overall felt that there was little support for positive interactions and education within the Tasmanian prison system, for example,

“What I found is, there is absolutely nothing proactive [in the prison education unit]” (Department of Education staff, ED004, 1, June 4, 2012)

Police felt that their experiences with offenders who had re-offended after various lengths of time within the prison system demonstrated an increased capacity and knowledge for criminal activities post release, for example:

They learn to integrate into a subculture; they learn the meaning of a hierarchy that people on the outside would have no idea about. They learn the meaning about maintaining silence and not dobbing, they learn a whole set of norms and values, that’s what they learn. They learn how to be their own lawyers; they learn that they don’t have to say anything when they are interviewed. They learn that if it’s an object that they picked up that has their fingerprints or DNA on it, they will tell you, that’s transportable. They learn different legal procedures, they learn how to commit crime, or perhaps commit crime in a more efficient or a better way to avoid detection, and yeah they learn a whole range of things. (Police officer, PO005, 1, August 18, 2011).

and,

I would like people to be rehabilitated from prison but that will never happen while things are the way I understand them to be. That is, they get worse or they just expand their network, trade ideas and they are not good ideas, they are not coming out of prison and starting a business... maybe a drug business,

maybe plan a decent con or something that will give them some money or whatever. (Police staff, PO001, 1, July 7, 2011)

Formerly incarcerated persons felt that overall the prison system did very little to positively change their lives, for example, *“It just learnt me how to survive, how to cope, how to read people. It never taught me no right and wrong. It taught me how to do better burgs, better armed robberies”* (Formerly incarcerated person, EP003, 1, June 14, 2011).

Overwhelmingly stakeholders felt that the proximity which prisoners had with one another would lead to learning about crime, expanding anti-social networks and being exposed to anti-social behaviours. For example:

I think just mixing with people that they probably wouldn’t originally mix with is not helpful, it probably gives some of them bad attitudes, I don’t know if it teaches them how to be criminal, I just think it teaches them how to be anti-social more than anything and a lot of them just come out of prison with a really bad attitude (Community Corrections staff, CC003, 1, June 16, 2011) and,

“I think locking them up together like that just encourages them to talk about stuff and to learn from each other in terms of their criminal behaviour” (Community Services sector staff, CS006, 1, August 19, 2011)

and,

“If people want to learn the trade of being a criminal, they can certainly learn it in that environment, in a prison environment” (Legal worker, LS002, 1, June 17, 2011)

and,

The problem with incarceration is the criminals in jail learn more about criminal activities as far as I am concerned; they become their own team, they meet other criminals, they talk about the way they do business and when they get out, they are keen to try and do business. (Police officer, PO002, 1, July 27, 2011)

5.3.3 Contributing to Pro-Social Learning

Stakeholders also felt that prison staff and service providers could contribute to prisoners' learning both pro-social and anti-social skills and behaviours. For example, *"I know of excellent prison officers who have a desire to teach and train and develop people, but the system hasn't allowed them to do that because of the structure of the service."* (Community Services sector staff, CS003, 1, June 15, 2011).

One respondent discussed the differences between two types of prison officers, highlighting the poor workplace culture which fails to support a care ethos:

I think there are two groups of prison officers. Some of them are just the turn key and think they have done the crime and we don't have to have any interaction with them at all, and then there are other people that try really hard in the prison to actually make it a positive experience. But those staff don't seem to last very long because the culture within the prison system is such that they get excluded as well, they get harassed and bullied and whatever. Prisoners see that, I mean they are not silly. (Community Corrections staff, CC005, 1, August 16, 2011).

5.3.4 Pro-Social Learning in Prison

Pro-social learning in prison included learning through engaging in pro-social activities such as criminogenic and behavioural programs, counselling, education and

some types of skilled work and training. Such activities offered a range of pro-social learning opportunities outside of the structured curriculum of the program such as learning daily structured living, discussing future pro-social plans and goals, learning about available services and how to access them, learning how to behave in a pro-social way, life skills such as communication skills and respect for others. Prisoners may get the opportunity to learn a different frame of reference and build their social understanding, along with their understanding of self and improved self-esteem. The greater the opportunities that prisoners had to access pro-social activities and people, the more positive stakeholders felt about prisoners' ability to learn pro-social skills.

For example: "*[If they are] lucky enough to be involved in an educational program, they can learn something, if they are lucky enough to be involved in some sort of rehabilitation program, they can learn things through that*" (Community Services sector staff, CS004, 1, June 17, 2011).

There were multiple views on the ability of prisoners to learn pro-social skills in prison industries, for example:

[There is a] carpenter shop and they do bloody good work over there, they've got a tailor shop and they've got an upholstery shop. If you're lucky, there's only a few placements in each one of those, and what about the people that work in the kitchen and bakery over there, why aren't they learning a trade, what a better place, you're working in a kitchen (Community Services sector staff, CS002, 1, June 14, 2011) and,

"[They learn] skills with their laundry or their bakery or their kitchen duties or a lot of them are involved in sport and that sort of thing, they are learning skills with that; I mean even just team playing" (Community Services sector staff, CS005, 1, August 16, 2011).

The data also highlighted the variety of stakeholders who could provide pro-social learning opportunities within the prison, for example:

from other service providers, I think they learn a lot, they learn about courtesy and politeness and that you can be treated as an individual for just who you are, that you can be treated without having done what you have done in the past affecting the way that person reacts to you (Department of Education staff, ED006, 1, October 2, 2012) and,

“Older prisoners mentoring, if you like, younger ones and hopefully setting them straight on the fact that prison is really not the best place to be” (Member of Parliament, PL001, 1, August 19, 2011).

5.3.5 Surviving the Prison Experience

Almost all respondents mentioned the need for prisoners to learn how to survive in prison. These ‘survival skills’ included a wide range of coping strategies (such as how to cope with stress, violence, living in confined spaces, having no privacy, living with strangers) and strategies used to manage the prison system to ensure survival (such as which officers were helpful, how to get required items including contraband, how to stand up for yourself). Prisoners spoke about learning how to maintain their sense of self and their human dignity within the prison environment:

How do you survive? Stand up for yourself, cop no shit from anyone, staff or crims. If someone tries to stand over you, have a go at them, even if you get a tapping. It’s only for half an hour but at least they will think a second time, you have had a go back and it won’t be easy for them to stand over you. Keep

your morals and keep your respect. Don't grovel to no cunt. And always believe in yourself. (Formerly incarcerated person, EP003, 1, June 14, 2011) and,

"I quickly learned how the prison system worked, you see nothing, you hear nothing" (Formerly incarcerated person, EP002, 1, June 6, 2011) and,

You get to learn who you should hang around with and who you shouldn't, you know, and you also learn like what to say, what not to say and how to say it and all this sort of stuff. So to a point you have got to be very manipulative in the way you talk and the way you act or otherwise people just think you are a soft cock, sort of thing and they come and pick on you. So you have really got to know what to do and what to say, how to do it and how to say it.

(Formerly incarcerated person, EP006, 1, August 18, 2011) and,

"I had to toughen myself. I have never been one to stick up for myself but I had to quickly learn to, in certain instances, stick up for myself" (Formerly incarcerated person, EP002, 1, June 6, 2011).

Stakeholders believe that the behaviours necessary for prison survival were predominantly anti-social and had to be 'unlearned' in order to function in the wider community.

For example: *"they learn survival skills and that is probably the most, that's what hampers their reintegration back into society the most, I find, because the skills that they learn to survive in prison are not rewarded on the outside"* (Community Corrections staff, CC001, 1, May 25, 2011).

In order to explore the concept of prison survival skills, responses were grouped according to similar themes which were used to refer to the skills and behaviours associated with surviving in prison which were mentioned specifically by

respondents. Table 5.1 in Appendix J was created by analysing the data from themes which emerged from respondents' dialogue. Participants were given a code which related to their stakeholder status (CC for Community Corrections, PO for Tasmania Police, PL for politician, DE for Department of Education staff, EP for formerly incarcerated person, CS for a community services worker). Participants who stated the same principle or skill are listed on the right-hand side, whilst examples of what was actually stated are included in the middle column.

Prison survival skills include enculturation into the prison system such as learning how to navigate the social environment and the rules of being a prisoner. The ability to survive prison requires skills and behaviours such as being hyper-vigilant, not trusting of others or the system. For example,

for her it was a total new culture to learn and when she came out I remember I was talking to her once and she said I have had to sort of, I can relax again, when she was in prison she was quite defensive because you have to be so people don't pick on you...hyper-vigilant (Community Corrections staff, CC001, 1, May 25, 2011)

and,

"He learns anger, he learns from the other guys because they're the guys that chose to never study, to be cynical, he learns huge distrust of things in systems"

(Department of Education staff, ED004, 1, June 4, 2012)

Formerly incarcerated persons shared the view of external stakeholders, for example, *"you really couldn't trust anyone, guards included"* (Formerly incarcerated person, EP002, 1, June 6, 2011).

Anti-social behaviours such as bullying, 'standing over' other prisoners and being able to get aggressive quickly were also considered important skills to develop

in order to survive the social environment. Being deceptive and manipulative, both of other prisoners and the system itself, were also discussed. For example,

it's how to survive you know and that's everything from the routine to looking after yourself, to you know, which custodial officers are worth (asking), and you know, which ones you just need to wait until the next shift to put in a request (Tasmania Prison Service ex-employee, EE001, 1, August 16, 2011) and,

I wasn't me down there... not being me and being untrue to myself and siding with a group for my own protection. I never hurt anybody but my morals would drop for my own protection to side with a group of girls. I hated that side of things, I hated having to be fake. (Formerly incarcerated person, EP002, 1, June 6, 2011).

Other skills participants mentioned included learning coping skills and patience with the system, learning to live in confined spaces with strangers and with no privacy.

5.4 Discussion

Within criminology, the issue of learning about crime, is dominated by Akers's social learning theory (Burgess & Akers, 1966; Akers, 1985, 1998; Akers and Sellers, 2009; Bandura, 1977). In Akers's model, social learning occurs through imitation and reinforcement. There is significant research in regards to the effect of a positive social climate on learning, personal development, academic achievement and retention (Harding, 2014; Liebling, 2004; Ross, Diamond, Liebling & Saylor, 2008). Recent research (Simons & Burt, 2011) suggests that the lessons which are communicated by events in a prisoners' life "promote social schemas that combine to

form a criminogenic knowledge structure that shapes situational interpretations legitimating or compelling criminal and antisocial behavior.” (p. 555). The messages and values communicated by recurring circumstances which form a large part of a person’s life, rather than a single event reinforcement, is what influences criminal learning and behaviour, that is, learning and behaviour is influenced most strongly by repetitive social interaction. They argue that “family, peer, and community conditions increase crime through a common mechanism; they teach a mutual set of lessons that are internalized as social schemas that justify crime” (Simons & Burt, 2011). It is possible that the prison environment may “teach lessons about relationships and about how the world works, thereby promoting a hostile view of relationships, a focus on immediate rewards, and low commitment to conventional conduct norms.” (Simons & Burt, 2011, p. 584)

Social environmental factors play an important role in shaping behaviour, the social environment of the prison is affected by the culture of the organisation. “Organisational culture is central to the treatment of offenders and the behaviour of staff.” (Stacey, 2009, p.1) As such organisational culture and climate can have a significant impact on pro-social learning opportunities and the development of pro-criminal social schemas. Harding (2014, p. 6) states, “the hypothesis that a positive social climate enhances rehabilitative program outcomes has become increasingly persuasive”. It has been argued that the quality of life in prison can depend on the nature of the relationships between front line prison officers and prisoners (Morgan, 1994). Liebling (2004, p. 446) states: “Prisoners who feel treated fairly may leave prison with healthier identities than those who feel abused”. This highlights the importance of relationships with staff and the culture of the organisation in which staff work.

Engaging in pro-social learning within the prison environment may not be an easy task for prisoners to undertake. Many stakeholders believed that significant barriers existed to gaining access to pro-social learning opportunities for prisoners, a problem highlighted by this research.

It is not only issues of equity and access to learning opportunities, which may cause difficulties, learning itself requires new behaviours. Prisoners are required to move between environments, from small therapeutic groups in which self-disclosure and openness is encouraged to some extent to prison yards where survival skills such as guardedness and suspicion are required (Howells, 2000).

Howells (2000) states that research has tended to focus on the outcomes of planned interventions rather than on the impact of the daily interactions within the prison environment. However, findings from the data gathered for this thesis indicate that the relationships with staff are important and impact on learning. The Scottish Government (2009) acknowledges that “These day-to-day interactions are often the key ingredient to a successful experience against the odds.” (p. 29) For example:

The learning a prisoner takes away from a 40 hour addressing offending programme will be in competition with, for example, the learning they take away from their experiences during the remaining 4,280 hours they would spend during 6 months in prison. (Houchen, 2005, p. 59)

Roberts and Indermaur (2009) suggest the wider community has little confidence in the prison system to ensure that prisoners are returned to society rehabilitated and skilled. This present study suggests that stakeholders share this view. In particular, a lack of access to adequately resourced pro-social learning opportunities revealed by a range of stakeholders, supported their view that prison had

a criminogenic effect. For example, *“Why can’t there be a TAFE college at the prison?...They could be going to school, doing a trade, learning, doing skilled labouring, all of that stuff and why aren’t they doing it?”* (Community Services sector staff, CS002, 1, June 14, 2011)

This present study suggests that the learning of prison survival skills and the learning and networking opportunities available due to proximity with other prisoners, has a negative impact on prisoners lives and their ability to lead pro-social lives on release. This present study suggests that adaptive behaviour in prison is perceived by stakeholders as being maladaptive behaviour outside prison, for example,

in the early stages of imprisonment, they learnt how to be prisoners, they learnt how to integrate into the system, they learnt how to keep their heads down, they learnt how to do what they have to do, we teach them how to be good prisoners and the problem with that is good prisoners don’t make good citizens, we don’t un teach that, and we don’t teach them to become good citizens before we release them, that’s bit missing (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, August 17, 2011)

Prison survival skills are, on the one hand, essential for prisoners to know but are also seen as promoting anti-social behaviours in the external community. This may be due to the fact that what stakeholders perceive as prison ‘survival skills’ may indeed be related to taking on criminal attitudes and beliefs, along with the effects of prisonisation. The data may suggest that the nature of the prison environment itself may support the development of social schemas which reinforce anti-social behaviours.

The culture and psycho-social aspects of prison life may require incarcerated people to take on the role of ‘prisoner’ and ‘criminal’ in order to be safe within the

prison environment and in doing so display attitudes and behaviours which would be perceived by others as in opposition to conventional norms (Wheeler, 1961).

A focus within the prison service on the risk/needs paradigm may in fact create a paradigm which asserts that all anti-social and dynamic risk factors must be removed from an individual in order for them to desist. However, this is unlikely to be the case, 'many of these ex-offenders remain, and indeed pride themselves in remaining, anti-authority, rebellious, adventurous and independent' (Porporino, 2010, p. 69) Changing these 'anti-social personality traits, behaviours and attitudes' (p. 69) has not been demonstrated by research as the key in moving offenders into desistance from crime, indeed, it is as yet unclear how to 'fix' an individual's dynamic risk factors (Porporino, 2010).

However, if provided the opportunity to engage in pro-social learning opportunities, participants felt that prisoners could learn pro-social skills which would lead to positive personal change. In this regard, findings supported the emerging theory of prison education,

Education provides qualifications and skills that serve to externally validate newly formed identities within an individual. Such external validation serves to improve a person's belief that they are able to successfully pursue a new identity. This relates to the outcomes of engaging in educational activity (Szifris et.al., 2018, p. 56).

5.5 Summary

Prison creates an environment where people 'unlearn' life skills and requires people to learn survival skills which stakeholders believe are largely anti-social. Whilst prison protects the community by removing freedom from the offender and

limiting potential further criminal activities to the prison environment, the available literature suggests that the 'benefits' to the community are short term and temporary.

A lack of resources, an environment which often does not support personal trust and development and a focus on short term security and punishment, all impact on the prisons' ability to provide positive pro-social learning and a social climate which supports personal change.

A lack of research, a confusion of goals and aims and a variety of models, theories and approaches from a wide range of disciplines and 'experts' contributes to an organisational system which the majority of stakeholders believe does not effectively support human rights and long-term community safety.

Unfortunately, good staff are typically stressed, under resourced and not supported to facilitate personal change and learning. They are run down or run out by others who resist organisational change and who display attitudes and behaviours which do not support a human rights approach to prison management.

A prison environment which must be survived by adopting anti-social behaviours, which provides some prisoners with the time and ability to network and learn pro-criminal skills, does not facilitate pro-social change. Yet despite all of this, valued learning and positive personal change does occur for some prisoners, sub rosa, by chance, and sometimes by design.

Chapter 6

Valued Learning

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will commence with a literature review based on the research question, it will then present the findings based on the data and discuss them.

6.2 Literature Review: What Learning is Valued by Stakeholders?

There are a variety of stakeholder views represented in the literature about what learning experiences are valued. For example, Clements (2004) argues that creativity, self-exploration and art enable personal transformation and lead prisoners towards a self-directed rehabilitative process, however, others value basic literacy education to be a more appropriate focus given limited resources (Findlay, 2004b).

Logan (1992) argues that the primary reason for activities to be made available to prisoners is that they are essential to the human condition and therefore essential to prisoner welfare and humanity. The learning that is valued by stakeholders is often focused on the needs of the individual learner (Office of Standards in Education, 2004; Scurrah, 2008; Tam, Heng & Rose, 2007; Australian Education Union, 2007). However, the views on who decides what those needs are

and how they should be assessed and resourced vary widely across both stakeholder groups and the cultural and socio-political environment in which they are formed. Indeed, the rise in centralised control of policy to senior levels of government agencies, many of whom have no professional experience of prison, “have led to an overreliance on cognitive behaviourism as a theory of intervention and group work as a system of delivery” (p. 3) along with a rise in risk factor analysis to decide who participates (Cowe, Brayford & Deering, 2010).

Within the literature there is a focus on the need to develop effective strategies to reduce reoffending (Martinson, 1974; Bonta & Andrews, 2003), thus education and criminogenic programs are often funded and evaluated solely based on their potential to reduce future crime and focus on risk reduction.

It has been argued that a desire for evidence-based solutions to offenders ‘problems’ has led to an over reliance on the risk factor basis to the exclusion of other theories and creative ways of working with offenders (Cowe, Brayford and Deering, 2010). Increasingly in regards to the assessment of criminogenic needs, actuarial assessment tools are utilized to determine the learning needs of prisoners. The collection of private and personal information through assessments, which often control decisions made about prisoners, and for purposes which the prisoner may not be privy to, serve to silence and pacify prisoners (Taket, Foster & Cook, 2009). These assessments can have a significant impact on the lives of those upon which they are used, and this may include denial of parole, higher classification status and a greater level of deprivation of freedoms (Zinger, 2004). A meta-analysis of 129 studies into correctional treatment programs found that often ‘treatment programs’ are mandated based on results from assessment tools, however, these mandated programs delivered

in correctional settings may have no impact on recidivism (Parhar, Wormith, Derkzen, & Beauregard, 2008).

While the focus of the majority of these programs is to target criminogenic risk factors it has been argued that these “may be neither sufficient nor even necessary to help offenders’ transition to non-offending [many desist without changing] their so-called anti-social personality traits and/or attitudes” (Porporino, 2010, p. 69). In contrast, MacKenzie (2006) found that effective programs focussed on individual-level change: however, it is unclear if these programs targeted change in personality or attitude or instead concentrated on skill development in problem solving, thinking and reasoning.

Criminogenic programs built around the ‘risk needs responsivity’ model, the focus on risk reduction for the community may overshadow the importance of motivation of offenders in creating a life which is not only socially acceptable, but one which is meaningful and satisfying to them (Ward & Maruna, 2007). The ‘risk needs responsivity’ model shows a “lack of appreciation for personal choice in the setting of treatment goals, [the model does not focus on] the importance of gearing treatment to the needs and interests of offenders while still modifying their level of risk” (Ward & Maruna, 2007, p. 87).

For some prisoners, input into what they would like to learn is not considered, even in an adult education setting. Research (Farrell, Danby, Skoien, & Quadrelli, 2001) undertaken in Queensland with sixteen female prisoners found that the offering of education was not influenced by prisoners themselves. One prisoner stated, “Well the funny thing is that with all those education classes, like they decide what they think is good for us...not once did they ever ask us” (Farrell, Danby, Skoien, & Quadrelli, 2001, p. 9). Whilst this prisoner was able to provide input on curriculum

development through a committee of prisoners and staff, prisoners typically were not engaged in developing individual educational goals (Farrell, Danby, Skoien, & Quadrelli, 2001). Not only are these methodologies not in line with adult education theory, they allow for practice that “lacks engagement with the person as a whole and ignores the wider context of people’s lives may not only ignore real opportunities for change and development but may in fact work against long-term change and risk reduction” (Cowe, Brayford and Deering, 2010, p. 4). This view is supported Cianchi (2009) who found that effective relationships between prisoners and officers focussed on seeing prisoners as individuals and a belief that prisoners can change.

The meta-analysis research (see for example, MacKenzie, 2006; Aos, Miller & Drake, 2006; Davis, et. al., 2013; Hall, 2015) focusses solely on the outcome of recidivism without exploring other potential positive outcomes for prisoners and the community. However, Warner (2007) argues against the narrowing of perspectives in prisoner education which often seeks to focus on labour market outcomes or criminogenic needs, rather than viewing the prisoner as a whole person. He argues for a broadening of perspectives to prisoner learning and the need to offer a broad curriculum in collaboration with prisoners and the wider community. The purpose of prison education should be seen as more than rehabilitation or addressing recidivism.

Liebling (2004) argues that a prisons management framework should support a variety of meaningful and constructive activities which increases self-respect and allows prisoners to learn, grow and develop. Prison activities were strongly related to prisoners’ perceptions of their quality of life and provide a catalyst for change and a sense of purpose. Gaes and Kendig (2002) outline a taxonomy of prisoner learning. It includes the following categories: academic skills, vocational skills/correctional work,

interpersonal skills, leisure time skills, cognitive skills, spirituality/ethical skills, daily living skills, wellness skills, mental health skills, and accountability skills.

Costelloe and Warner (2003) argue against the narrowing of prisoner learning opportunities which focus on “the underlying presupposition of many of these courses is that prisoners frequently make bad choices or the wrong choice due to an underdevelopment of certain cognitive and moral abilities” (p. 8) and the current discourses in prisoner education which focus on the medical model that depicts “all prisoners as being in need of treatment” (p. 8). They state that “over-focusing on so-called criminogenic factors, and on the prisoner’s short-comings, is a limiting and negative approach” (p. 2). The reality of the narrowing of prisoner education is also noted by teachers in the UK (Levy, 2004).

Unfortunately, learning is increasingly being reduced to a commodity in our society “whose value is measured in terms of how it provides economic success rather than how it models the skills to think critically and participate in democratic processes” (Giroux, 2009, pp. 111-112). This can be seen in the focus on providing prisoners learning which focusses on an employment outcome, this presupposes that there is work available that they could successfully compete for, despite their criminal record and gap ridden work history.

Connell (1995) states that “people survive in an impersonal labour market by mobilising personal links” (p. 97), particularly networks linked to employment. Prisoners are less likely to possess these links due to a loss of social capital through incarceration and possibly through not having friends or family with stable employment. Unfortunately, vocational education and training alone will not assist in overcoming the considerable barriers prisoners face in gaining employment. Having a low-level certificate from TAFE is unlikely to provide an economically stable and

rewarding job after release (Bauman, 2004; Giroux, 2009). Indeed, in Tasmania's economic climate, increasingly work is likely to be casual, contract based and unlikely to provide long term security and stability (Bauman, 2004; Giroux, 2009). Here we see a nexus of factors, situational, structural and those of social disorganisation, which when combined, create incredible barriers to employment for prisoners re-entering the community (White & Graham, 2010).

Consultations as part of the development of the Tasmanian Corrections Plan (Department of Justice, 2009) focused heavily on reducing reoffending, including criminogenic programs, vocational education and education, along with supporting the delivery of strengths-based case management to enhance informal learning and pro-social modelling. Learning was seen by stakeholders primarily as a means to reduce re-offending and to gain employment.

Learning which is commonly valued by both prisoners and staff includes basic math, literacy and social and interpersonal skills (Braggins & Talbot, 2003; Braggins & Talbot, 2005; Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006; Moeller, Day & Rivera, 2004; Golding, 2002). Often referred to as 'digital literacy', the provision of information and communication technologies to prisoners has become increasingly important. Digital literacy enhances both vocational and education outcomes of prisoner learning, and social inclusion, as well as future employability (Bedford, Dearden & Dorman, 2005; Levy, 2004; Golding, 2002). Research into female prisoners' educational experiences (Farrell, Danby, Skoien & Quadrelli, 2001) highlights that they value a broad curriculum which includes life skills, physical activities, art, crafts and practical experiences. Whilst this research focussed on female prisoners, it is not dissimilar to the needs and desires of male prisoners. For example, sport in prison is valued as a means of promoting well-being, of engaging with the community and reducing

recidivism (e.g., Caplan, 1996; Digennaro, 2010; Meek, 2012; Meek, Champion & Klier, 2012).

In overseas research into prison officers' views on prisoner learning (Braggins & Talbot, 2005), prison officers had a broad view of education and an understanding that it represented anything that helped change prisoners' lives for the better. This research consisted of 14 group discussions with 77 prison officers across 12 prisons in the United Kingdom. The research revealed that prison officers saw educational priorities for prisoners as being personal, social and health education. Prison officers felt that they could and did have a role to play in teaching these skills to prisoners. They also valued vocational training and the learning of skills, including literacy and numeracy, which would assist prisoners in being able to obtain employment on their release – particularly those which offered real jobs available in the prisoners' home area. Interviews with 10 prison officers in Tasmania (Cianchi, 2009) supports the view that officers want to achieve good outcomes for prisoners including working to achieve positive change in their lives. This includes influencing prisoners to pursue education, for example, one officer states, "I have got him doing three courses and he's enjoying them, he's turning up every time and his attitudes improved" (Cianchi, 2009, p. 43).

For some prisoners learning anti-social and criminal skills is valuable and may also add their feelings of social value and self-esteem, particularly within a prison environment (Newbold, 2003). "Overcoming subcultural identities and affiliations, including those learned in prison, remains a major obstacle", (p. 161) to achieving pro-social personal change (Newbold, 2003). In the pursuit of a criminal identity and career, some prisoners will pursue the development of criminal skills, which is made simpler because of the close proximity and ease of interaction with other prisoners

within the prison environment. However, learning criminal skills may simply be unavoidable for some, because of the prison environment, for example, one young offender states:

you really ain't learning nothing...they say jail supposed to help you learn from your mistakes, but once you get in here you ain't around nothing but a bunch of criminals ...That's all you doing, learning more criminal ways, so when you get out you can be a better criminal...it ain't helping you better yourself. (Elrod & Brooks, 2003, p. 342).

Similarly, Hoskinson (1998) discusses a role play activity where one prisoner was teaching another the correct way to intimidate a shop assistant during an armed robbery.

“Prisons teach certain skills that impede life as an independent citizen, while they fail to teach the very skills that are needed on the outside” (Cordilia, 1983, p. xv). Skills, such as learning to be responsible for and organising their day to day lives, are removed from prisoners, which may erode their ability to think and make decisions about the choices that they have. Instead, prison forces prisoners to associate almost solely with other prisoners, commonly does not allow for a normal working routine and removes from them adult roles such as those of mother or father (Cordilia, 1983), for example,

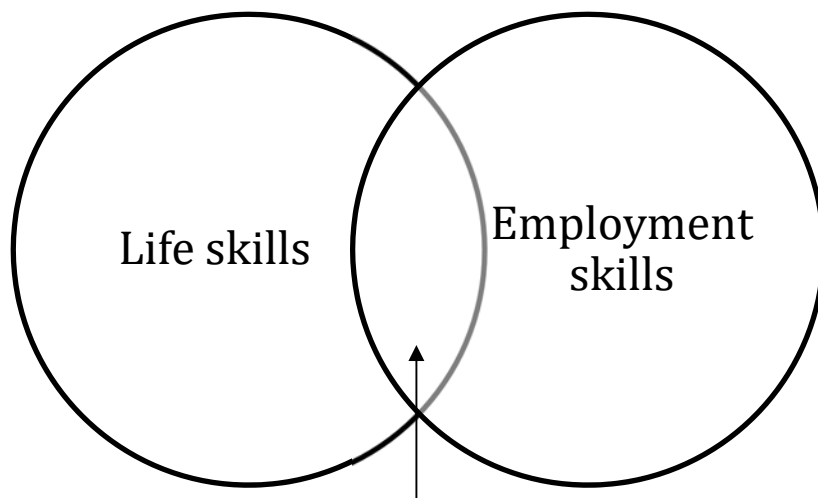
Prison order is often viewed as the primary mission...This leads to an emphasis on regimentation, close monitoring, and highly structured environments that are not conducive to giving inmates opportunities for self-regulation and self-control. These structured environments also often lead to a clash in staff subcultures between the program providers and the security sentinels. (Gaes & Kendig, 2002, n.p.).

Prisoners also value learning prison survival skills (Matthews, 2006), indeed much has been written about the complexities of adapting to prison life (Johnson & Toch, 1982, 1996; Cordilia, 1983; Stohr & Hemmens, 2004). Harvey (2007) states there are three main ways prisoners have to learn to adapt to prison life; practically, which involves learning about the regime and entitlements; socially, which involves learning to interact with others in the prison environment; and psychologically, which involves learning effective coping strategies to deal with the prison experience.

The literature demonstrates that a wide range of learning opportunities are valued by prisoners, teachers and officers. The opportunity to engage in pro-social activities, whilst limited by prison routines and the social environment of the prison, is considered vital to facilitating personal change. The importance of relationships and the opportunities which learning provides to break free from the label of offender are highlighted by the literature. On entering prison for the first time, people need to learn to navigate the social world of prison and cope with the pains of imprisonment. During the prison experience, many prisoners seek to balance the negatives of prison life with pro-social activities which foster personal development.

6.3 Findings

Learning is valued for the knowledge and skills that it delivers, for the quality of the learning and the way in which it is delivered. Valued learning was perceived by the majority of participants as broadening learners' world view, stimulating self-awareness and awareness of others, engaging the mind and senses and being delivered in a pro-social manner. Participants discussed two main types of valued learning – life skills and employment skills – with some skills being both valuable for life and work.



Skills relating to life and employment

Figure 6.1. Valued learning in prison

Life skills include a range of skills associated with being a good citizen and living a pro-social lifestyle. Stakeholders referred to skills such as parenting skills, relationship skills, cooking skills, a range of skills associated with desisting from crime, health and fitness education and skills to undertake pro-social hobbies such as art and sport.

Employment skills include knowledge and skills which contribute to employment and work life, such as trade skills, formal and accredited education and employment seeking skills.

Also, there are a wide range of skills which fall into both categories, including literacy and numeracy, digital literacy and computer skills, personal organisation skills, communication and social skills, problem solving skills, financial management and budgeting skills.

Documentary data highlighted the principles identified by Tasmania Prison Service senior managers in regards to valued learning which includes “employability,

function in society, life skills, a learning model for life, pathways at all levels, assessment as appropriate but not necessarily the end goal, activities linked to learning” (Department of Justice, 2013, p. 2). Senior Managers believed that “the TPS’ role should be to support access to education, rather than deliver it” (Department of Justice, 2012, p. 2). It was also noted that “the Breaking the Cycle strategic plan recognizes the importance of delivering education aligned to labour market needs, not just what inmates want to study” (Department of Justice, 2012, p. 2) and, as such, hospitality and construction had been identified as important delivery areas (Department of Justice, 2012).

Documentary data from 2012 suggests that the priority order of services should be firstly, VET, followed by literacy and then TCE (high school). It was also suggested that automotive and engineering were traditional apprenticeship industries with good prospects (Department of Justice, 2012). In addition, individual intensive programs focused on the Australian Core Skills Framework, along with Release for Work programs were also viewed as important areas (Department of Justice, n.d.).

The TPS Delivery Plan focused on maximising program delivery in the following areas; industries, criminogenic programs, sport and recreation, self-directed activities, labour, VET and community engagement programs (Department of Justice, n.d.).

6.3.1 Employability

Documentary data reveals a strong focus on employability and trade skills within the strategy of prisoner learning in Tasmania and reference to work skills appeared throughout many interviews. Pre-apprenticeship programs were seen as

valuable by stakeholders. Skills Australia (2010) discusses the role of pre-apprenticeship programs in the current approach to apprenticeships in Australia

Pre-apprenticeships aim to prepare a learner to become an apprentice with realistic industry knowledge and expectations. They provide a useful means of entry for those who cannot initially secure an apprenticeship contract... It is ... very important that pre-apprenticeships include a useful amount of workplace experience so that learners can appreciate the conditions in which they will be expected to perform. (Skills Australia, 2010, p. 44)

Under current Federal funding arrangements, prisoners are excluded from the Australian Apprenticeship Access Program, and as such, funding has to be sourced elsewhere for these types of programs to be undertaken in prisons. Documentary data shows that the cost of this type of program is approximately \$7,000 per participant (Department of Justice, 2012). However, in 2014 a review of TasTAFE charges for 2015 show a 50% increase per hour of delivered training.

Stakeholders felt that the work release component was “a crucial element of the program as it provides on the job training with a greater possibility of accessing an apprenticeship post release” (Department of Justice, n.d., p. 1) and funding was provided for 10 places at a cost of approximately \$70,000 (Department of Justice, 2012). A further two pre-apprenticeship programs are to be completed in 2014 with funding from Skills Tasmania, one to be run in construction and the other in bakery (Department of Justice, 2013).

In regards to the need to link prison work with learning outcomes, it was reported in 2013 that “all employment areas can have a formal learning outcome attached” (Department of Justice, 2013, p. 1) and that work was being undertaken by

both Department of Education and Department of Justice staff to identify and map these links.

In 2011, the prison was delivering construction courses, bakery, horticulture and barista courses (Department of Justice, 2011). In 2012, documentary data stated that approximately 80 prisoner students were engaged in VET in hospitality (6 men, 6 women), food processing (4 men), horticulture (7 men, 8 women), engineering (5 men), barista (9 men, 6 women), community services (5 men, 6 women), business (4 men) and Prepare for Work and Study (12 men, 5 women). However, in 2012, it was indicated that barista and cookery were not valued by prisoners (Department of Justice, 2012).

Funding was received in 2012/13 for the provision of Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) via online delivery, computer building, peer literacy training and a gardening project which links to the delivery of accredited training in horticulture (Department of Justice, n.d). By mid-2013, it was reported that four prisoners had completed the RSA online and that further funding had been applied for including make an electric guitar and make a strum stick, planning was also underway for a 'taster' program for prisoners on short sentences (Department of Justice, 2013). Results for the pre-apprenticeship program were also reported with an expected eight completions from an initial enrolment of fourteen. Projects students worked on included work around the prison facility such as fitting out a video link room and building a desk for the officer's station (Department of Justice, 2013).

Specific employment related skills mentioned by participants includes training in a wide range of industries and skills such as horticulture, agriculture, aquaponics, operating equipment and machinery such as chainsaw training, forklift and heavy machinery training, trades training including construction, mechanics and painting,

boat building, hospitality training, specialist retail skills such as butchery, occupational health and safety including first aid and safe chemical use and training in the community services sector and training for volunteering work.

Whilst learning which contributed to the possibility of future work was valued by the majority of stakeholders, many saw vocational education and training as being of value even if work was not readily available in the community or not accessible to an offender. A number of vocational skills were valued as life skills such as cooking, gardening, operating equipment, painting, construction skills and social skills learned in community services sector training.

6.3.2 General Education

In 2012, a total of 90 prisoners were engaged in TCE subjects with total instruction hours of 16, 750 (Department of Justice, 2012). In 2013, TCE subjects were still being delivered into the prison, however, discussions centred on the value of the current curriculum (particularly subjects such as Latin and Ancient History), which were not viewed as being the skills required by prisoners (Department of Justice, 2013). By September, 2013, the Department of Education view was that “prisoner education should be focused on outcomes and work to support general education and literacy...that DoE probably does not want colleges involved in the prison but that they would be happy to make e-learning materials available” (Department of Justice, 2013, p. 1) By 2014, it was decided that TCE programs were no longer to be offered to prisoners and that the colleges and Flexible Learning Network would withdraw from the provision of education to prisoners and that management responsibility for all prisoner education and training was to be transferred to TasTAFE (Department of Justice, 2014). The result is that there is

currently no offering of high school subjects or general education of this kind to prisoners and that the only formal education on offer within the prison system is vocational education and training.

6.3.3 Broadening Education

Participants stated that prisoners should have access and be encouraged to participate in “*education in terms of its broader sense, in terms of developing ideas, developing skills, being able to talk to people, being able to share ideas, being able to be creative*” (Department of Education staff, ED005, 1, September 7, 2012).

Opportunities in prison should build prisoners’ self-esteem and sense of self-worth, allowing them to demonstrate that they are capable of successfully engaging in new and pro-social activities. Learning should “*be positive, it has to be learning that values and uplifts and affirms rather than directing enforced learning*” (Department of Education staff, ED001, 1, June 16, 2011).

In addition, opportunities in prison should challenge anti-social behaviours and lifestyles and assist prisoners to identify alternatives and develop new pro-social goals. The majority of respondents asserted that valued learning should have a positive, capacity building, pro-social focus.

6.3.4 Access, Quality and Quantity of Education

Amongst participants’ views on valued learning key issues of access, quality and quantity of valued learning in the prison system were mentioned frequently, for example,

they should come out of prison rehabilitated and ready to go back into society and hopefully given the skills to actually manage living in society, so use the

time that they are in prison constructively (Community Corrections staff, CC004, 1, June 16, 2011).

Others expressed frustration at the lack of facilities and focus in regards to policy, for example,

“Why can’t there be a TAFE college at the prison?...They could be going to school, doing a trade, learning, doing skilled labouring, all of that stuff and why aren’t they doing it?” (Community Services sector staff, CS002, 1, June 14, 2011) and *“We should be running back to back programs”* (Community Corrections staff, CC006, 1, July 4, 2011).

6.3.5 Coping with Prison Life

Many participants also felt that it was important to ensure that prisoners learned how to cope with prison life and maintain personal safety in prison in a pro-social way, specifically mentioning peer mentoring programs and induction programs for prisoners.

Whilst most participants stated that employment related skills were important to a prisoners’ ability to desist from crime upon release, it was equally important for prisoners to attain a basic standard of education, particularly literacy, numeracy, social and communication skills. Participants also stated that it was important that prisoners develop skills which would enhance their quality of life on release including health and pro-social recreational pursuits.

6.3.6 Being Involved in the Community

Learning, which could be combined with experience or work placement or which involved the general community, was also highly regarded by participants, as was participation in voluntary activities, for example,

“giving people opportunities to engage and do things and get feedback from the real world” (Department of Health and Human Services staff, DE002, 1, August 19, 2011) and *“get them involved in community activities”* (Community Corrections staff, CC005, 1, June 22, 2011).

This ‘real world’ exposure also enabled pro-social community networks to be developed, assisting with *“social connectivity”* (Community Services sector staff, CS007, 1, September 15, 2011), *“because the majority of pro social learning has to do with family, friends, workplace, social education support, recreational cultural links”* (Community Services sector staff, CS007, 1, September 15, 2011) and, *“the best thing that they can do is to have positive acquaintances”* (Community Corrections staff, CC001, 1, May 25, 2011).

Prisoners should be seen learning and applying their skills in the community, for example, respondents stated such ideas as *“explore options to get these people out doing something for the community”* (Community Corrections staff, CC012, 1, August 17, 2011), and *“repairs and maintenance on community houses and old people’s homes”* (Community Services sector staff, CS002, 1, June 14, 2011), and *“we got them involved in this street art project, they are painting the signal boxes...find things like the Umpires program that we are running, doing the work for the Scouts...doing work on National Park walkways...work with neighbourhood houses”* (Community Corrections staff, CC012, 1, August 17, 2011).

These types of activities not only allow prisoners to learn and develop their skills in a real-world setting, they also provide learning opportunities in victim impact and restorative principles, for example,

If we were able to build restorative justice pathways, whereby offenders are given the opportunity to repair damage, to repay debt, to balance ledgers, to

accept responsibility, then not only are we rebuilding the community capacity, we're reducing the cost to the community as well. (Community Services sector staff, CS003, 1, June 15, 2011)

6.3.7 Valued Learning in Prison

The key areas which emerged from the data include:

- Communication skills such as learning to articulate in a pro-social way, listening skills, ability to express their needs and receive feedback
- Literacy and numeracy such as basic education, reading, writing, digital literacy and computer skills
- Schooling and general education such as completing school to Year 12 and general education not directly related to employment, for example, learning how to learn and study, discovering talents and TAFE and University preparation courses
- Social skills such as conflict management, relationship skills, parenting skills, working and living with others, being adaptable and interacting with others in a pro-social way
- Skills to assist prisoners to cope with prison life such as prison induction, peer mentoring, smoking cessation programs, training for prisoners' committees and parole preparation
- Citizenship skills such as taking personal responsibility for actions, being socially responsible, respect for others, self-discipline, how to be community minded, understanding choice and consequence for themselves and others, self-reflection and awareness, skills which assist prisoners to

reintegrate into the community upon release, how to live in a pro-social way in the community and knowledge of the law

- Personal organisational skills such as how to be organised, how to set and attain goals, budgeting and financial management skills and prioritizing and decision-making skills
- Desistance from crime skills such as learning related to addressing offending behaviours, understanding the impact of offending including victim impacts and restorative justice concepts, de-identifying with the criminal lifestyle and making and maintaining pro-social friends
- Health and nutrition skills such as nutrition and meal preparation, mental health, physical activity, first aid and meditation
- Hobby and sport skills such as training and looking after animals, creative arts, debating, gardening, crafts, volunteering and participating in community activities, reading as a hobby, sailing, woodwork, bookmaking and books on compact disc
- Employment skills such as pre-employment and job search skills, finding pathways to employment, training and education directly related to gaining employment, work health and safety and generic work skills

Table 6.1 in Appendix J presents the data and links the data to respondents.

Responses were grouped according to key themes which were repeated frequently by participants – communication skills, literacy and numeracy, schooling and general education, social skills, skills to assist prisoners to cope with prison life, citizenship skills, personal organisational skills, desistance from crime skills, health and nutrition skills, hobby and sports skills, employment skills. Examples are provided of these

themes taken from the data. Participants who stated the same principle or skill are listed on the right-hand side, whilst examples of what skill or concept was actually quoted are included in the middle column.

6.4 Discussion

Research suggests that social exclusion decreases pro-social behaviour, “pro-social behaviour depends on believing that one is part of a community in which people mutually seek to aid, to support, and, occasionally, to love each other” (Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, Bartels, 2007). This present study suggests that being socially excluded from the wider community and placed into a prison community may contribute to anti-social behaviours. The social environment of prison becomes an important, but often overlooked, element in prisoner learning. Formal education, criminogenic programs and other approved activities need to be developed and viewed within a wider strategic approach which takes into account informal learning and the impact of the social climate. The learning which occurs informally needs to conform to the learning provided within formal programs. In addition,

a focus on health – especially psychological health – needs should precede such demanding work and that the tight focus on ‘criminogenic’ factors is likely to be unhelpful. The explicit focus on ‘criminogenic need’, like the policy focus on ‘offender management’, of itself, headlines that aspect of the prisoner’s identity that separates them from the rest of the community. A socially inclusive approach would emphasise and seek to develop those aspects of the prisoner’s identity that affiliate him with dominant norms and

with contributing and valued membership of our communities. (Houchen, 2005, pp. 70-17).

Findings from documentary data indicate that the priorities for prisoner learning within the Tasmania Prison System focus on learning skills which will result in employment post release. Resource constraints have seen the removal of high school subjects and an increased focus on ‘the basics’ of work skills, followed by literacy.

The risk is that work with prisoners focused on employability and removing the barriers to gaining and continuing in employment will be seen as a solution to the issue of social exclusion...Improving people’s potential to compete in the labour market can contribute to their fuller participation in their communities. It is not by itself, however, a remedy to this much more broadly-based problem. (Houchen, 2005, p. 73)

The focus on work skills (and life skills which relate to employment) may not be sufficient to overcome the myriad of issues faced by prisoners on release. Valued learning is so much more than work or life skills and a focus on only these elements narrows the opportunities for prisoners to engage. This broadening of view is captured by Champion (2013), who asserted:

Learning outcomes in prison should focus on giving prisoners the ability to cope with life in and out of prison (resilience), the ability to desist from offending (desistance) and the ability to make a positive contribution to their family and community. These outcomes may encompass, but go far beyond, helping a prisoner have a job on release. (p. 12).

The philosophy of ‘throughcare’, which may be described as a continuous and coordinated process of reintegration of prisoners from their first point of contact with

corrections through to re-entry into the community (Clay 2002, p. 41) is mentioned frequently in documents relating to the Tasmanian Prison Service (Department of Justice, 2008). In 2016, a paper was released by the Tasmanian Government to support the *Breaking the Cycle Strategy* outlining the goals to support throughcare from 2016-2020 (Department of Justice, 2016). This is included in Appendix F.

However, the majority of participants stated that the reality of delivering throughcare to prisoners is absent for the majority of prisoners, many of whom are released without any support into the community. For example, *'I know that there is actually not much throughcare at this point'* (Community Corrections staff, CC001, 1, May 25, 2011) and,

I have about five clients now that are in jail and they are on probation with me I don't contact them regularly while they are in there now I think that that is a whole area that should be done because I think it's around that planning for coming out and while the prison says that they do it I notice huge differences in what is done for one and what is done for another. (Community Corrections staff, CC002, 1, May 31, 2011)

Clear recognition must be given to the proposition that persons who return home from prison face significant personal, social, and structural challenges that they have neither the ability nor resources to overcome entirely on their own. Post-release success often depends of the nature and quality of services and support provided in the community, and here is where the least amount of societal attention and resources are typically directed. This tendency must be reversed (Haney, 2001, p. 18).

This present study suggests that valued learning should be centred on the individual learner and take more than just a deficit view of the person. It needs to commence with a view of the prisoner as an adult learner who is situated in a

challenging environment. Like any other adult learner, the prisoner needs to be ready and motivated to learn and prison staff should be focussed on assisting prisoners to pursue personal development based on the persons unique desires rather than focussing on their criminogenic needs.

Participants felt that valued learning assists the prisoner to see new opportunities and new ways of living in the community, opening up a range of lifestyle choices which may not have been apparent to them previously. The findings of this research supports the emerging theory of prison education in regard to the proposition as stated by Szifris et. al., (2018) that,

In prison education, learners can be exposed to different ways of thinking and alternative lifestyle choices. This can serve to develop meaningful concepts of a possible future self with education acting as a ‘hook’ into new ways of being and encourages new identities. This relates to the process of engaging in educational activity (p. 51).

Valued learning creates personal change, it challenges, and it is inclusive in nature. Unfortunately, the reality for many prisoners, those who are fortunate to be offered an opportunity to engage in pro-social activities, the choices are often limited. Learners may not be motivated to participate in programs which may be viewed as ‘better than nothing’ and as such the learning may not have the desired outcomes.

6.5 Summary

Valued learning is supported by the principles of adult centred education, access and equity and ensuring that people get the support which they need to engage in personal development. Exclusion and the use of negative labelling has no place in the valued learning arena, instead it is strengths based and focused on the individual

learner. It is not about risk/needs or enforcing on others an 'approved' world view, but instead supports learners to discover and challenge their own thinking in their own time and way. The continued pursuit of 'what works' for offenders and the labelling and categorising of their learning and development needs based on their offence type detracts from need to respond to adult learners as individuals with unique needs and desires. The narrowing of perspectives in prison education, which contributes to limiting choice and availability of learning opportunities provided by prison systems, should be reversed given the complexities involved in desistance and behavioural change.

Learning which was valued by stakeholders includes communication skills, personal organisational skills, health and nutrition skills, engaging in pro-social hobbies and sports, literacy and numeracy, employability skills, along with schooling and general education. The development of social skills, skills to assist prisoners to cope with prison life and broader citizenship skills were also valued. Skills and knowledge which led to a desistance from crime were valued such as learning related to addressing offending behaviours (e.g. sober driver, getting a driver's license and learning road rules, anger management, substance abuse, self-awareness, gambling addiction), understanding the impact of offending including victim impacts and restorative justice concepts, de-identifying with the criminal lifestyle, and making and maintaining pro-social friends

Valued learning is more than just about improving employability, reducing recidivism or coping with prison life. It relates to what is valued by the prisoner in their own lives and leads to outcomes which they, as individuals and members of the community, want to achieve. Valued learning centres on positive personal change which assists the individual to lead a rewarding and productive life in the community.

If prison is to be 'effective' the system and the individuals who operate within that system must strive to enhance opportunities for prisoners to engage in valued learning opportunities.

Chapter 7

Enhancing Valued Learning

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will commence with a literature review based on the research question, it will then present the findings based on the data and discuss them.

7.2 Literature Review: How can Valued Learning be Enhanced?

One key to enhancing valued learning is the removal of barriers to prisoner learning as “the structural and cultural dimensions of prison life work against effective participation in the types of education that would contribute to rehabilitation” (Farrell, Danby, Skoien & Quadrelli, 2001, p. 9). To reduce the criminogenic effects of the prison experience there should be opportunities to engage in pro-social activities. The routines and processes of prison and its social environment make delivery and participation in adult education difficult to achieve.

Prison practices and policies, such as the use of isolation and segregation can exclude or inhibit prisoner learning, Marlow (2005) writes, as a current prisoner of

Risdon Prison, that “During my, and the others, segregation we were never encouraged, or given, the opportunity to do education courses and sport was something that we could only watch on TV” (p. 4), he also states that it was a luxury to be provided with a book from the prison library, which was treated “like a TattsLotto win” (p. 4). Whilst this is an anecdotal comment, specific to the experience of a prisoner in Tasmania, it is reinforced in the literature (Braggins & Tabot, 2003; Prisoner Learning Alliance, 2016).

More recently the Ombudsman’s Report (2010) highlights the lack of access to learning opportunities and the level of inactivity experienced by some prisoners. A significant issue facing prisoners is that of access, equity and inclusion in education and training practices within the prison. The lived reality of prisoners highlights the ways in which some are routinely excluded as they are not viewed as ‘suitable’ or they do not have the appropriate ‘risk level’, and as such are labelled as not worth the resources required to offer services to (Scurrah, 2008). The following table highlights the literature surrounding the issue of barriers to prisoner learning.

Table 7.1

Barriers to Prisoner Learning

Type of Barrier	Definition	Examples from literature into prisoner learning
Dispositional barriers	Dispositional barriers are internal to the learner and can be further broken down into those which are psychosocial (such as values and beliefs) and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental illness (Henderson, 2003; James & Glaze, 2006) • Learning difficulties and disabilities (Douglas, 2001; Holland, Persson, McClelland, & Berends, 2007; Talbot, 2006) • Motivation (Braggins & Talbot, 2003; Golding,

	those which are informational (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999)	<p>2002; Edwards-Willey & Chivers, 2005; Management and Training Corporation Institute, 2003; Moeller, Day, & Rivera, 2004; Noonan, 2003; Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous educational experiences of prisoners (Black, 1990; Callan & Gardner, 2005) • Drug and alcohol issues (Gillespie, 2005; Noonan, 2003; Penfold, Turnbull, & Webster, 2005) • Dealing with prison stress and poor coping (Scurrah, 2008; Wooldredge, 1999) • Problems getting information on resources that are available (Bearing Point Inc., 2003; Braggins & Talbot, 2003) • Lower rate of pay for prisoners participating in education (Braggins & Talbot, 2003; Callan & Gardner, 2007; Danby, Farrell, Skoien, Quadrelli, 2001; Douglas, 2001; Golding, 2002; Levy, 2004; Minogue, 2007; Scurrah, 2008) • Sentence length (Farrell, Danby, Skoien, Quadrelli 2001; Management and Training Corporation Institute, 2003; Scurrah, 2008)
Situational barriers	Situational barriers are external to the learner and often beyond their control (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999)	

Institutional barriers

Institutional barriers are the practices and procedures of the institution that prevent or discourage participation (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999)

- Sentence planning (Minogue, 1999; Scurrah, 2008)
 - Overcrowding (Marquart, Cuvelier, Burton Jr., Adams, Gerber, Longmire, et al., 1994)
 - Unsupportive prison culture, incompatible agendas and philosophies (Behan, 2007)
 - Disruptions and interruptions to learning due to operational issues (Braggins & Talbot, 2003; Douglas, 2001; Farrell et al., 2001; Tewksbury & Vannstrand, 1996)
 - Lockdowns (Cordingley, 2007, 2007b; Douglas, 2001; Matthews, 2006)
 - Conflicts with work (Black, 1990; Farrell, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c)
 - Movements and transfers within prisons (Black, 1990)
 - Limited access, long waiting lists and poor resources (Braggins & Talbot, 2003; Callan & Gardner, 2007; Management and Training Corporation Institute, 2003; Marquart, Cuvelier, Burton Jr., Adams, Gerber, Longmire, et al., 1994; Scurrah, 2008)
 - Lack of staff training (Farrell et al., 2001; Scurrah, 2008)
 - Shortage of staff (Farrell et al., 2001; Scurrah, 2008)
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- Approval processes and negotiations (Farrell et al., 2001; Minogue, 1999; Scurrah, 2008)
 - Location of prisoner, use of isolation and segregation (Marlow, 2005; Scurrah, 2008)
 - Priority given to filling jobs within prisoner industries (Callan & Gardner, 2007; Levy, 2004)
-

Whilst not all of this literature is discussed in depth, the majority of it has been discussed and drawn upon throughout this thesis. As highlighted in the Table above, the research into prisoner learning provides a significant understanding of the wide range of barriers which prisoners face when learning in formal contexts within the prison environment. Outside of these formal opportunities, there is little research into the barriers to pro-social informal learning. However, work such as that of Liebling (2004) which focusses on the environment of prison may assist to understand the values and quality of the prison environment, highlighting the need for a supportive culture within the prison. It is possible that by enhancing the organisational culture and relationships within the prison, not only will there be a reduction in barriers for formal learning, but it may also improve the opportunities for pro-social informal learning. This seems to be supported by research such as Braggins & Talbot (2005) which looks at officers' perceptions of prisoner learning.

Creating a learning environment within prison requires an organisational culture which supports learning. Research has identified the need for supportive institutional contexts which values and respects all students; encompasses an institution-wide approach that is comprehensive, integrated and coordinated through

the curriculum; incorporates inclusive learning environments and strategies; empowers students by making the implicit, explicit, and focuses on student learning outcomes and success (Devlin, Kift, Nelson, Smith, & McKay, 2012). However, often there is a fundamental difference in values between educators and prison staff, indeed it is “difficult to create a trusting learning environment in an institution that is built on mistrust” (Behan, 2007, p. 165). Indeed, prison discourse focusses on the past and the crime, along with factors such as risk, control and routine, whereas education allows people to focus on the future, personal growth and potential (Prisoner Learning Alliance, 2016).

The importance of the role of custodial staff to prison culture and to the encouragement and facilitation of prisoner learning is an important factor which can both enhance and create a barrier to prisoners learning (Braggins & Talbot, 2005). Perceptions of custodial staff differ widely based on the individuals’ perception of the value of education and the type of learning the prisoner is engaged in (Braggins & Talbot, 2005; Scurrah, 2008). The Report of the Fitzroy Legal Service (1988) noted that:

education tends to be viewed by prison officers, who have an almost supreme reign over the lives of those in prison, as somewhat destructive to the daily equilibrium of prison bureaucracy and as an unnecessary privilege and not pertinent to the punishment of prisoners. (p. 36).

However, not all prison officers share this view, Cianchi (2009) found that effective prison officers worked ‘tenaciously to achieve positive outcomes...this clearly meant doing things differently to other prison officers’ (p. 43)

Teachers play a prominent role in enhancing the learning experiences of prisoners (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006). Similarly, Barlow (2005) argues that

correctional educators not only teach basic skills to prisoners and model pro-social skills, but actively work with prisoners to construct a more fulfilling and rewarding life. Teachers assist learning through providing prisoners with the opportunity, resources and support to help them make changes to their thinking and their lives. Likewise, in the meta-analysis of 427 studies relating to criminogenic programs, factors important to treatment outcomes include staff characteristics such as empathy, appropriate modelling, humour and personal warmth (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Similarly, in-depth interviews with four correctional teachers (Bhatti, 2010) reveals that mutual respect and humour are important characteristics of the teacher-student relationship within a prison setting.

Johnson (1996) discusses the concept of a ‘decent prison’, which he describes as featuring a secure social world in which prisoners “have the opportunity to develop constructive interpersonal relations with one another, with staff, and with people from the ‘free’ world” (p. 11). He argues that the goal of a decent prison is to foster citizenship, to equip prisoners with the ability to adapt to life and to problem solve in mature and responsible ways. He defines mature coping as:

dealing with life’s problems like a responsive and responsible human being, one who seeks autonomy without violating the rights of others, security without resort to deception or violence, and relatedness to others as the finest and fullest expression of human identity. (p. 98).

Tam, Heng and Rose (2007) provide a range of recommendations on improving education in their research on staff and prisoner views of education services in a Singapore prison school. Participants included 58 prisoners and 10 staff. Recommended improvements included in-service training programs and mentoring for correctional educators, a prison staff orientation program which includes

discussion of the philosophy of prisoner education, along with working committees to improve staff communication and cooperation. Other recommendations included opportunities for prisoners to consult with education staff outside the classroom, introduction of a peer tutoring program, a documented individual education program, a well-resourced dedicated private study area and an annual independent evaluation of the prison school.

The need for adequate physical resources, such as a quiet study space, is important to enhancing prisoner learning, one Queensland prisoner stated:

They should have some sort of quiet room, a quiet place where people can go in and they've got access to you know, computers, you know what I mean just quiet time. You know, like in libraries, you know what I mean...But in our library it is so small you can't even, there's no desks in there, it's just like a little room. (Danby, Farrell, Skoien, Quadrelli, 2000, p. 14).

Research into 153 UK prisoners' views of their learning experience (Braggins & Talbot, 2003) revealed that they felt that their learning could be enhanced through more resources and a greater number and variety of activities, increased personal choice, along with improved access and scheduling of learning opportunities. They wanted to see more part time options which allowed for work and study, an end to waiting lists, improved facilities including access to a library, and programs involving employers. Increased staff numbers and improved training for teaching and custodial staff, improved communication and information for prisoners were also mentioned as recommended by prisoners (Braggins & Talbot, 2003).

In commenting on the ideal prison education system one teacher states "We'd have a very broad curriculum and not just addressing basic skills. We'd offer induction programmes...and devise programmes tailored to each individual after

thorough assessment of their needs” (Levy, 2004, p. 20). de Graaff (1998) discusses prisoner education in NSW and laments the way in which reports and inquiry recommendations in regards to prisoner education are often put aside to ‘gather dust’ rather than being actively implemented and discussed with stakeholders.

In research focused on the provision of vocational education and training within prisons in Queensland, Callan and Gardner (2005) interviewed 110 prisoners and 35 staff who work in prisons. Semi structured face to face interviews were conducted with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous male and female prisoners and a wide range of staff including officers, trainers and program staff. Interview questions focussed on the types of programs prisoners engaged in, the motivations underlying participation and the types of jobs the prisoner was seeking post release. Staff were asked about the types of programs, prisoners’ motivation and how prisoners were supported during their training. This research highlighted the importance of the identification of appropriate training for prisoners, the adoption of a module-by-module approach in the delivery of training courses, and the need for access and availability to dedicated training spaces. There was also a need to address motivational factors in order to enhance learning from vocational education.

The provision of vocational education and training to prisoner populations is often linked to gaining employment post release (Callan & Gardner, 2007). Supporting the earlier NCVER literature (Dawe, 2004), Bowman and Souery (2010) found that a key link between vocational education and training programs and finding employment after completion suggest the need for support before, during and after the program. This research suggests that:

where people had strong social networks and resources, training and formal credentials assisted them to secure employment. However, for many other

students training is only part of the solution. Without support and mentoring, a certificate or qualification is not sufficient to enable them to get and keep a job. (p. vi).

Given the often complex needs of prisoners and the barriers they face to gaining employment (Callan & Gardner, 2007; Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle & Hardcastle, 2004; National Board of Employment Education and Training, 1992; Borzycki, & Baldry, 2003) ongoing support to secure employment is likely to enhance sustainable employment, the provision of a qualification alone is not enough.

Borzycki and Baldry (2003), drawing on international research and a roundtable discussion held at the Australian Institute of Criminology, describe some of the promising trends in the provision of reintegration services including a continuation of tailored programs initiated in prison after the person has returned to the community. Of importance are partnerships, a resourced commitment to throughcare and the formation of stakeholder networks in order to enhance service delivery. This is also highlighted in Dawe (2004) in a chapter discussing a throughcare approach to offender management. However, sustainable funding for programs in Tasmania which enhance reintegration outcomes is often problematic for stakeholders (Scurrah, 2008; The Mercury, 2010).

In regards to learning through prison work, Crook (2007) states:

The chances of rehabilitation are maximised in an environment that fosters a sense of self-worth and self-reliance through the provision of structured programmes and activities. This demands a balanced regime that offers goals and incentives, reasonable wages, the opportunity to save, realistic working conditions and recognised vocational training. It is necessary to demonstrate to prisoners that they are capable of achieving something. It is also necessary to

convince prisoners that legal employment can offer stability and opportunity – what has in the past been called the work ethic. (p. 304).

Valued learning through prison industries may be enhanced through the provision of vocational qualifications, if meaningful work is available on a part time and full-time basis, and is available to all without penalty or enforcement. It is also important that prison work creates opportunities for prisoners to work for the benefit of the community, either within the prison complex or within the community, through agreements with external organisations, and is audited regularly with results made publicly available on a regular basis to the wider community (Crook, 2007; Scurrah, 2008).

7.3 Findings

The majority of participants stated valued learning could be enhanced by removing barriers to prisoner participation and ensuring sufficient quality learning opportunities were available and accessible to all prisoners. For example,

all the barriers, all the different barriers, the poor culture of the organisation, the poor culture of the prison officers, the lack of support for educators in the prison, the inability to get materials, materials getting lost, an officer thinking that one way of punishing a guy is to stop his education materials coming in, to take his laptop away, whatever it is (Department of Education staff, ED004, 1, June 4, 2012).

The lack of throughcare was also seen as a major barrier to the effectiveness of valued learning, as without ongoing support new skills and behaviours could be difficult to sustain. Increased support and resourcing for valued learning was seen as a

key issue, in particular, support from prison staff and management was perceived to be lacking by the majority of respondents.

7.3.1 Removing Barriers

A Prison Education Steering Committee was formed after the release of the Tasmania Prison Service Education and Training Strategic Plan, the purpose of the group being to oversee the implementation of the plan. The committee first met in March 2011 and between 2011 and 2014 met a total of ten times with various senior members of both the Education and Justice Departments. During the 2011/12 period a commitment was made for the Department of Education to supply the Department of Justice a total of 20,000 face-to-face hours of teaching time for prisoners (Department of Justice, 2011). In addition, it was discussed that the focus on employment outcomes may attract additional government funding (Department of Justice, 2011). In 2013, funding had been received for up to nine teaching positions within the Department of Justice budget, although it was not stated what the focus of that teaching should be (Department of Justice, 2013).

A report from the Tasmania Prison Service and Department of Education Working Group identified the following principles which should underpin the delivery of learning to prisoners,

- Learning is individualized
- Learning is structured so that prisoners are successful
- All learning is accredited (whether in prison workplaces, VET, FLN or other)
- Continuity of learning across prison settings is ensured
- Continuity of learning into the community is ensured

- Education assessments and planning are fully integrated into TPS assessments, sentence planning and throughcare
- Workplace learning is flexible and structured so that it is:
- Responsive to labour market demands
- Incorporates career guidance
- Provides meaningful pathways into further training and work
- Modular – i.e. provides short term, achievable goals
- The model provides coordination between various streams of education/providers/institution/other partners. (Department of Justice, n.d., p. 10)

The report provides an overview of various models employed to deliver prisoner education by the different states and territories and provides an overview of the current model for the provision of education to prisoners. The report states the poor literacy standards of prisoners as 78 per cent of assessed prisoners are below Australian Core Skills Framework standards, and thus a high level of specialist learning need and intensive learning support is required. The report also outlined the positions and functions required in order to deliver education services effectively including a coordinator role, National Foundation Skills Package including Core Skills Literacy, flexible learning, volunteer coordination, learning support, specialist learning support, VET, administrative support and IT support. The report outlines the approximate funding and resource provision for 2012-2013, the Department of Education providing \$883, 154 constituting 62 per cent of the cost, whilst delivering 62, 560 contact hours, constituting 87 per cent of student contact hours. The Department of Justice provided \$537, 089 constituting 38 per cent of the cost, whilst

delivering a total of 9,280 student contact hours, constituting 13 percent of student contact hours. This would indicate that the cost for the Department of Education to deliver education to prisoners to be approximately \$14.12 per student contact hour, rather than the cost for the Department of Justice at approximately \$57.87 per student contact hour. This is likely due to the administrative and coordinating functions of the majority of Department of Justice staff and may also be contributed to the organisational culture operating with the prison service.

Documentary data also highlighted the issues faced in delivery of valued learning within the prison environment including the need to ensure cultural change to create a culture supportive of education and improvements to infrastructure (Department of Justice, 2012). During 2012, two issues registers were provided by the Prison Vocational Education and Training Operations Committee, one in July and the second in October. These documents are included in Appendix I.

The following key issues have been identified:

- A lack of clarity of the role of the TPS in the delivery of prisoner education
- Low enrolment numbers
- Insufficient range of courses
- Access issues
- Conflict with prison operational issues and security
- Lack of communication with stakeholders
- Long lead times of approvals
- Insufficiency of prisoner education allowance

- Restrictions on the types of educational methodologies available and the constraints of these due to the nature of the prison environment
- Costs associated with delivery
- Insufficient infrastructure for training and a lack of resources
- Lack of employment support for prisoners
- Data collection and data provision issues
- Limited time for working prisoners to access education opportunities

A summary of this information is provided in Table 7.2 in Appendix J and includes suggested methods which have been raised internally to address these issues.

The TPS Delivery Plan also highlights ways valued learning can be enhanced through increased open communication with regular staff and prisoner forums, induction programs for non-uniformed staff, and ensuring work health and safety standards in all prisoner employment activities. In addition, documentary data revealed that stakeholders believed prisoner learning opportunities could be enhanced through a more flexible attitude to the delivery of educational activities including increasing approval for prisoners to move between prisons for study, for leave to pursue external study and for mixed classes of prisoner and non-prisoners on prison property (Department of Justice, 2012).

7.3.2 Providing Resources

The majority of participants felt that organisations should be well resourced in order to deliver valued learning including appropriate staffing and organisational structure, capability of staff and management, a strong desire and vision to achieve valued learning, strong knowledge exchange processes between organisations and adequate and sustainable funding.

7.3.3 Improving Collaboration

Poor knowledge exchange and communication between organisations affected the ability to successfully deliver throughcare (from prison to post release support).

There was a sense of frustration from Community Corrections staff about their inability to gain information from the prison or to maintain any contact with prisoners, one respondent stated *“There’s not a lot of interaction with Community Corrections in the prison and they come out and often they are out before we know about it, because people don’t tell us”* (Community Corrections staff, CC005, 1, June 22, 2011). The majority of participants perceived a lack of commitment to providing post release support, one participant stated that:

there is no commitment for throughcare...it’s just an add-on as far as people who run prisons are concerned with. If there is a responsibility for successful throughcare and it was part of the way the prison was overseen then it would be more likely to be taken seriously” (Tasmania Prison Service ex-employee, EE001, 1, August 16, 2011).

Throughcare appears to be something *“that just doesn’t happen; it really is frustrating because we have been talking about this for years, you know, this throughcare stuff and it still hasn’t happened”* (Community Corrections staff, CC006, 1, July 4, 2011).

Many participants felt that *“they talk about throughcare and all this stuff, you know it’s a nice word and it sounds good...but it’s not really done.”* (Community Corrections staff, CC002, 1, May 31, 2011)

In addition to issues of the delivery of throughcare and information flows, the availability and number of programs operating for prisoners to access was also raised by respondents, for example:

We are not doing enough in the prison to rehabilitate, there's not enough information flowing, no throughcare stuff. There's not enough as far as I'm concerned there's not enough programs being run in corrections; we should be running back to back programs. We should be addressing their offending.

(Community Corrections staff, CC006, 1, July 4, 2011) and,

A lot of our clients want to be involved...and maybe if they are in max or in medium they can't get into programs and I think that programs should be available to all prisoners...it's a real opportunity for the State to educate the prisoners there and give them an opportunity to have an education which would help them secure jobs on the outside and just live a better quality of life.

(Community Services sector staff, CS001, 1, April, 29, 2011).

7.3.4 Compulsory or Voluntary?

There was a plurality of views regarding mandatory programs and activity, with some respondents stating that programs should be mandatory and others believing that enforced learning would be ineffective. For example:

I think we should have on-going programs, I don't think there are...I think they should be mandatory and I think they should be a programs unit in the prison and there should be programs in the North West and the South and we should have on-going programs run the whole time. (Community Corrections staff, CC006, 1, July 4, 2011) and,

I think it's an opportunity where we should mandating people to address the issues that cause them to offend. So I don't think people should have a choice about attending a program or whatever it might be....they should be in employment or education, that's obligatory, absolutely mandatory, what do you want to do, what are you going to do. You have a job, you go out to work, you come back to prison, you pay board, you pay for your expenses, you save some money, maybe for your victims compensation, for your family or for your release. (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, August 17, 2011) and, I just think making several of the programs that they have in prison, not in prison but having them mandatory for people to attend, for either drug and alcohol, like I said for the sex offenders course, I don't think you should need to be incarcerated to attend those things and they can really change a person's life and turn them around. I think that it should be mandatory that they should go to these programs. (Community Services sector staff, CS001, 1, April, 29, 2011).

However, others felt strongly that “*You can't force them into it, you can't make them do it*” (Department of Education staff, ED001, 1, June 16, 2011) and “*They might not be ready and I think to force people...when they are not ready, can be a form of abuse*” (Community Corrections staff, CC001, 1, May 25, 2011) and,

The worst thing you can do to them is preach to them. It's about giving them choices and engaging them and trying to motivate them into the benefits for them for not offending rather than saying well you can't because I say so...it's about, you do it because you want to do it, rather than me sitting here and saying you have to do it. (Community Corrections staff, CC005, 1, June 22, 2011).

7.3.5 Enhancing Learning Services

A number of respondents spoke about the need for further culture change, in both the prison, and specifically within the prison education team. One respondent stated that there should be “*more competent staff in the education team over there*” (Department of Education staff, ED003, 1, October 10, 2011). Other examples include:

I think it can be enhanced with more education teachers within the system itself and a completely different approach...it needs to be more hands on, it needs to be there every day, there needs to be someone in medium every day and someone in maximum everyday available, so more hands on and completely different management system. (Department of Education staff, ED006, 1, October 2, 2012) and,

You are talking about people running an educational program that don't have the skills or knowledge to do it...there's no one there with any energy, any desire...they are already operating in what amounts to a toxic environment in terms of the push back that you get from officers, not all, some of them are brilliant, but you are already working in a difficult environment, with a difficult target group and you are employing people that don't have the skills and abilities to do their job. (Department of Education staff, ED004, 1, June 4, 2012).

The issue of capability was also combined with issues of poor workplace culture and continuing infrastructure issues. One respondent stated that “*not only is there a need to drive a more structured approach to what we offer in the prison, there*

is also a cultural change and infrastructure issues that need to happen on the prison side” (Community Corrections staff, CC012, 1, August 17, 2011).

Community Corrections staff spoke about the changes in the way that the community corrections service operates and the type of staff recently employed. Respondents believed that there was a focus on staff from police and investigative backgrounds rather than social work backgrounds and that the service had become increasingly focused on breaching offenders, actuarial risk assessments and record keeping rather than working with people to create opportunities for personal change. Many respondents from within Community Corrections felt that the service was being ‘dumbed down’ and had become process focused and bureaucratic, one respondent stated:

So we have this paranoia almost, this obsession about filling out forms and getting everything accurately recorded and because that takes so much time, it actually detracts from your ability to spend time with the person. So where it used to be probably you would spend 80 per cent of your time, say you allocated an hour and a half for an interview, you might spend 80 per cent of that time talking to that person and you would spend 20 per cent writing it up, maybe doing a letter or whatever, now it’s probably the other way around...it’s about can you fill out all those forms correctly with a certain minimal amount of deviation from how your team leader can fill them out and seriously the front page of the performance management system, which is like seven forms, it a whole series of tick boxes to see if you can fill out the forms accurately. It’s all the paperwork, the file is central... instead of the person. It’s about can you do this, can you do that and its fear driven and its risk

averse, so there's this whole terrible fear. (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, August 17, 2011).

7.3.6 Increasing Access to Learning Opportunities

Respondents also spoke out against the prison policy of withholding programs and opportunities to those sentenced to six months or less. For example:

what happens when they are in prison to stop them reoffending...they are going into prison for three months or six months, coming out, doing it again, going in for three or six months or nine months as the sentences get longer...when you look at it at the end of the day, over 90 per cent of the people we sentence have significant issues with alcohol, drugs, mental illness and add in homelessness, literacy, all those things and you are sentencing people to imprisonment for x months and not doing anything about those issues, and that's why I was stunned, you know they should be trying to do something about these issues. (Legal worker, LS002, 1, June 17, 2011) and
"Half the inmates there are on six months or less, none of those would be getting any help, so you got to be in there long term before you actually get any support" (Community Services sector staff, CS006, 1, August 19, 2011) and,

I understand the dynamics and the demographics and the practical barriers to putting people into programs but we also know that the prisoners who cause most trouble are the short term prisoners, you know the people basically serving three months or less, they are the hard ones. (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, August 17, 2011) and,

This policy also caused friction between stakeholders, for example, we had a big argument with IOMU, they didn't want us to work with inmates that

hadn't been sentenced or inmates that were sentenced less than six months. I mean if you're picked up for drunk driving you get three or four months, so if we can't work with them, I mean what better time to work with a person that's in there for drunk driving, you've got a captive audience. (Community Services sector staff, CS002, 1, June 14, 2011).

It was felt that the policy demonstrated the inefficiency and poor workplace culture within the prison, for example, *"But six months, seven days a week, in the one spot, is almost a lifetime of opportunity with one of those offenders. To say six months isn't enough, doesn't cut it for me"* (Community Corrections staff, CC007 & CC008, 1, July 27, 2011).

7.3.7 Removing Barriers to Enhance Valued Learning

There are three main types of barriers to learning – situational, dispositional and institutional (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). These can be related to the five interacting systems which influence prisoner learning. Thus, dispositional barriers relate to the individual system, institutional barriers relate to both the learning and organisational systems and situational barriers relate to the social and environmental systems. Removing barriers was perceived by respondents as enhancing valued learning. In this way, a barrier, once removed, becomes an enhancer of valued learning.

Data revealed the following key ways which valued learning can be enhanced, firstly by ensuring basic human rights are met, including:

- Ensure the physical health of prisoners
- Ensure the mental health of prisoners
- Ensure suitable housing during incarceration and post release

For example, “*better health care and health outcomes*” (Community Corrections staff, CC012, 1, August 17, 2011) and “*I mean things like mental health issues are really important*” (Community Corrections staff, CC006, 1, July 4, 2011).

Secondly by ensuring a supportive and human rights focused social environment, including:

- Encourage self-reflection and address motivational issues
- Provide information to prisoners about learning opportunities
- Ensure prisoners have access to support from pro-social peers, providers, staff and family
- Reduce pressure to conform to anti-social peers and minimize the need to use prison survival skills
- Ensure a prison environment which is supportive of learning

For example,

far too often the use of visits or the loss of visits is used as a punitive measure in prisons and quite often far too many people suffer inappropriately through lack of visiting rights, whereas, long term, it's something that should always be maintained. I think it's too easily used; lack of visits as a punitive measure inside of prisons (Community Services sector staff, CS004, 1, June 17, 2011).

Thirdly by ensuring organisational systems are in place which support valued learning, including:

- Diverting people from prison
- Ensure political and senior management will and community support for a human rights approach to prison management
- Ensure information flows between stakeholders

- Ensure prisoners have access to learning opportunities
- Ensure the provision of adequate and suitable resources
- Ensure appropriate design and delivery of learning opportunities and resources
- Ensure staff are inducted and have the required skills to work effectively with prisoners

For example,

I just think there's so much scope for reform. Some of it would be so easy to implement... it's not stuff that takes a huge amount of money, what it takes is the will, the political will, the management...I actually think it's the senior managers on the ground that make the difference, they've got to get it ... they've got to care about it and want to actually change and they got to just do it (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, August 17, 2011)

Table 7.3 located in Appendix J provides a summary of the data. In the table responses were grouped according to each of the five systems and an overall description of the way that valued learning should be enhanced. Examples are provided of these descriptions taken from the data, along with a list of the respondents who discussed each description.

7.4 Discussion

A primary concern of stakeholders was the issue of equity and access to education for prisoners. Resource constraints, a lack of integration with providers, an unsupportive workplace culture, staff who lack the competence to undertake their role, and poor policy all contribute to what stakeholders believe is a failure to provide sufficient pro-social learning opportunities to prisoners. Systems tend to perpetuate an

exclusionary effect, focusing on the deficits of people and continuing to label them as offenders and inmates and exclude them as members of the community (Houchen, 2005). The present study demonstrates that the prison environment creates significant barriers to pro-social learning and may reinforce pro-criminal social schemas.

In the context of prison, attention has to be paid not simply to the good work that is being done on initiatives designed to be helpful, but on every activity, every procedure, every assumption that constitutes the fabric of prison life and from which the prisoner learns his role in society...We cannot expect people in prison to change in a way we favour because of some intensive investment of resource over a fraction of their time when they report a background of experience that they find threatening and humiliating. We cannot expect them to join us in espousing the values we assert if their experience is that we treat them as unworthy of the care and attention with which we treat each other. (Houchen, 2005, p. 86-87)

Similarly, Behan (2007) advises correctional educators to “be vigilant to avoid the language of correctional and business models” and not to be “subsumed into correctional agendas” as “language is a powerful weapon in the battle of ideas” (p. 159) and that there are significant differences in the culture and values of educational and penal institutions.

It is possible that valued learning can be enhanced by identifying and removing the institutional and systemic barriers to prisoner participation. By taking a strategic risk management approach and ensuring that a holistic view of prisoner learning is taken, systems processes and all prison activities may be reviewed in order to improve and enhance prisoner learning. The present study highlights the need for particular attention to be paid to issues of resourcing and allocating suitable human

resources are allocated, along with ensuring an appropriate social climate and environment which supports learning and personal development. The attitudes and behaviours of staff and ensuring a workplace culture which supports prisoner learning are vital to enhancing valued learning within the prison.

7.5 Summary

Porporino (2010) suggests that valued learning may be enhanced by moving away from ‘our programme fetishism, casework managerialism, and our compliance-on-demand syndromes when working with offenders’ (p. 80). Instead of insisting that, as experts, workers have the answers to prisoners’ problems, workers should instead listen and focus on working with individuals to ‘clarify their goals and what they value in life’ and help support and shape their plans for a crime free future (p. 81). Prisoners need to be extensively involved in shaping their own learning journey.

Findings outlined that in order to support valued learning there needs to be a focus firstly on the individual by ensuring the physical and mental health of prisoners, suitable housing during incarceration and post release and access to support from pro-social peers and family.

The environment of the prison should encourage self-reflection, address motivational issues and reduce pressure to conform to anti-social peers and minimize the need to use prison survival skills. The prison environment must be supportive of learning and positive personal change.

Staff should be focussed on providing support to prisoners and information about learning opportunities. Staff must be well trained and have the required skills to work effectively with prisoners.

Management should ensure that staff are supported, resources aligned to ensure a focus on rehabilitation and support and ensure that systems facilitate prisoners and staff to communicate and engage with providers.

Management must be held accountable to ensure that all prisoners have access to pro-social learning opportunities and ensure appropriate design and delivery of learning opportunities and resources. A transparent management approach should be adopted to enhance information flows with stakeholders.

Politicians should consider ways to divert people from prison, ensure the provision of adequate and suitable resources and monitor the prison system with a focus on a human rights approach to prison management. All stakeholders should work together to ensure community support for a human rights approach to prison management.

Attention should be paid to the 'messages' policy and practice communicates to prisoners through the hidden curriculum as they experience life in prison. As one respondent stated, "*Prisoners see that, I mean they are not silly.*" (Community Corrections staff, CC005, 1, August 16, 2011). It is possible that some of these 'messages' affect prisoners' feelings of self-worth and may contribute to feelings of defeatism, apathy and an inability to engage in positive personal change whilst in prison.

Removing and addressing the barriers to learning which prisoners face, creating a positive learning environment and ensuring adequate resources are vital to supporting and enhancing valued learning. It is possible that the application of a systematic risk management approach to dealing with barriers at both a strategic and operational level will assist the organisation to address the barriers to prisoner learning. It requires a whole of community approach involving stakeholders,

including those currently incarcerated, at all levels, in policy development, resource allocation, procedural design and implementation.

Chapter 8

Benefits of Valued Learning

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will commence with a literature review based on the research question, it will then present the findings based on the data and discuss them.

8.2 Literature Review: What are the Benefits of Valued Learning?

MacKenzie (2006) argues that “crime reduction is one of the major, if not the major, goal of correctional policy” (p. 3). The rise of ‘evidence-based corrections’, a model based on ‘legitimate knowledge’ and scientific research conducted in an empirical manner, provides a primary economic justification for the provision of learning to prisoners. However, as discussed, at times this model fails to meet the prisoner as an individual, instead labelling them as ‘other’, as excluded from the community, and as a person who is in need of ‘fixing’ by experts.

Recidivism rates are used as a key performance indicator and justification for programs and education, as such, much of the research into the benefits of prisoner

learning focus on outcomes such as crime reduction and employability post release. However, there are many and complex issues affecting recidivism rates and employability. Based on a review of evidence based correctional research, MacKenzie (2006) concludes that, life skills education, correctional work programs, residential treatment and community supervision for juveniles, boot camps, intensive supervision, domestic violence programs and psychosocial sex offender treatment programs are not effective in reducing recidivism. This is in contrast to the effectiveness of correctional education programs. However, it should be noted that Lewis (2006) argues against continuing to use recidivism as a measure of effectiveness, as it is not a holistic approach and leads to ambiguity. By not controlling for other variables, many studies fail to display methodological rigour and the focus of measuring recidivism at the macro level ignores many of the other causes of recidivism.

When considering recidivism and the goal of crime reduction, successful reintegration into the community is important. Gaining employment after release is seen as a key determinant to successful reintegration into the community, employment increases financial resources along with other resources such as support systems and relationships (Callan & Gardner, 2005; Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle, & Hardcastle, 2004). Formerly incarcerated persons may experience a variety of barriers to employment including type of crime committed, along with its relationship to the position being offered (Coley & Barton, 2006) and government hiring incentives (Albright & Denq, 1996), additional factors such as low educational levels and low literacy levels, lack of steady and successful work histories, may also affect employment.

Learning which focuses on increasing vocational skills and assisting prisoners to find employment after release includes vocational education and informal learning which occurs through the provision of work in the prison environment. However, a criticism of correctional industries and work programs is that it does not emphasise personal change (MacKenzie, 2006). From an educational perspective, VET policy and practitioners view work in a prison industry as ‘not real work, for a real employer’, making it almost impossible to complete a trade qualification solely within the prison environment.

Learning has a wider range of benefits than simply reducing crime and assisting with reintegration, research (Schuller, Preston, Hammond, Brassett-Grundy and Bynner, 2004) suggests learning has positive benefits on health and well-being, family relationships, social attitudes, civic participation and social capital. They assert that learning has a much wider effect than simply on the individual but benefits the community as a whole. This is supported by research involving focus groups with prison educators and students (Prisoner Learning Alliance, 2016) which reveals five broad themes in relation to the benefits of education: wellbeing, human capital (motivation to change, moving forward), social capital (belonging and community, active engagement) and knowledge, skills and employability (p. 2).

Corrections staff, teachers and prisoners believe there is improvement in the attitude and behaviour of prisoners who were participating in education and training has a positive impact on the prison environment (Cox & Carlin, 1999; Torre & Fine, 2005). In addition, research has demonstrated that involvement in education programs lowers violent misconduct in prison (Pompoco, Woolredge, Lugo, Sullivan & Lutessa, 2017). Recent Australian research (Phillips, 2019) involving the official data relating to 2,084 male and female Indigenous and non-Indigenous prisoners in

Western Australia revealed that prisoners who are enrolled in programs are less likely to have an aggravated prison record. This research highlights the potential of education and training programs to create a more humane prison environment. It is possible that an increased focus on pro-social learning within the prison environment may create less desire amongst prisoners to engage in learning anti-social and pro-criminal skills.

In an evaluation of the delivery of adult education in Victoria involving community corrections staff and stakeholders central to the delivery of adult community education (MC Media & Associates Pty Ltd, 2006) it was noted that teachers and coordinators believed that the benefit of participation for persons serving a community sentence included:

increased self-esteem and confidence which improved their ability to interact with other people and to gain employment; improved capacity to focus on and engage in training which had flow-on benefits to other aspects of their lives; satisfaction of having completed a course and the confidence that resulted from this; further study opportunities sought and taken up, and employment (p. 81).

The indigenous coordinator felt that indigenous participation in education had “benefits for the wider community” (p. 69). Similarly, in research on literacy education prisoners felt that it improved self-esteem, social skills and a sense of achievement (Golding, 2002).

Hoan (2005) states that art teachers report a number of benefits to prisoners learning art, including the discovery of themselves as creative persons, improvements in concentration and the development of problem-solving skills. Art teachers saw learning art as providing students with goals to work towards and providing a sense of

self-worth and discipline. Art can also provide a bridge to further academic work as well as providing practical skills which could lead to employment or self-employment.

Research into theatre work with prisoners highlights the value of prisoners discovering a different identity to that of ‘offender’ assisting them to acquire capabilities which support desistance (Davey, Day & Balfour, 2015). Theatre can provide a mechanism for prisoners to gain insights into their life and play out a prosocial future. Prisoners also develop skills in team work, collaboration and commitment to a common task, skills which are vital to both work and life.

It would seem that a wide range of learning opportunities, if offered to prisoners, may have a positive effect on reintegration for very different reasons.

8.3 Findings

The majority of participants believed that the benefit of engaging prisoners in valued learning experiences was that the prisoner would learn skills, knowledge and behaviours which could assist them to lead a pro-social life, both inside and outside of prison. Many participants believed that by providing prisoners opportunities to engage in valued learning that there would be a benefit to the community through reduced offending. Valued learning would assist to *“make the community safer by helping those people to become more valuable members of society than perhaps they have been”* (Community Corrections staff, CC012, 1, August 17, 2011).

The Prison Education Working Group paper states “Education is one of the most important factors that can enable a prisoner to reintegrate successfully into the community and avoid reoffending...The primary focus of the plan is on increasing prisoner skill levels and their capacity to gain employment on release” (Department of

Justice, n.d., p. 1) Other documentary data highlights plans to respond to the findings of the Palmer Report, particularly in regards to activities in maximum security units, which outlines the benefits of prisoner activity as reducing the risk to staff, reducing the cost to society of releasing prisoners who have not engaged in pro-social learning, to improve prisoners quality of life and reduce the level of frustration and boredom experienced by prisoners (Department of Justice, 2012). Programs such as the Books on CD are believed to have benefits for family literacy, improving both prisoners and their children's literacy (Department of Justice, 2012).

8.3.1 Benefits of Broadening Opportunities for Valued Learning

Pre-apprenticeship programs, offered to prisoners six months prior to release, are believed to provide “the chance for participants to be better prepared for apprenticeships on release and more attractive to employers” (Department of Justice, n.d. p. 2).

The benefits of the Risdon LINC, available to prisoners in Ron Barwick, are believed by internal stakeholders to not only provide a range of library services to prisoners whilst incarcerated but also to “be familiar with the services when they are released from prison” (Department of Justice, n.d., p. 2).

Engaging in a range of valued learning opportunities was seen by the majority of participants as contributing to desistance from crime, the development of pro-social networks and improving prisoners' life chances. Valued learning assists to “*break down the barriers for them*” (Community Corrections staff, CC001, 1, May 25, 2011). Many participants spoke of prisoners being locked into a cycle of offending which they were unable to break out of without support and opportunities, for example:

what I realised was he was quite symbolic of the bigger social problem of people who are just locked in this cycle of poverty, cultural poverty, material poverty, spiritual poverty, every sort of poverty really and he had never seen anyone in his family work. People in his family went to jail, that was what they did (Community Corrections staff, CC011, 1, May 25, 2011) and, they are usually dependent on welfare, they would have drug and alcohol addictions or substance abuse problems, their children have never seen what we would call 'normal,' they have never seen mum or dad go out to work or dad go out to work and mum being at home, they don't necessarily go to school with a packed lunch, all that sort of thing, if they go to school at all, and they are not necessarily encouraged to go by their families. They see government and all the agencies associated with that as the complete enemy and I guess whilst their parents will come in and sit on [police] interviews and that sort of thing, its awkward because they are people that have been charged and been through the system and they don't see what is happening to their child as entirely wrong because [it's just what's done], that's right and their parents have probably done it too (Police officer, PO003, 1, August 10, 2011).

8.3.2 Benefits for the Individual

Benefits of engaging in valued learning for the individual include increased chance of employment, improved relationships, a healthier lifestyle, improved self-esteem and a sense of achievement and success. An important benefit of valued learning is the cumulative effect that can occur, an increase in self-esteem and self-confidence can lead to prisoners being more confident to access more opportunities,

in addition, the benefits can have a flow on effect to other areas of their lives and to other people in the prisoners' life, such as family members, for example:

So if, as a prisoner, I am able to learn things about myself, about self-management, about self-esteem, and self-awareness. If I can learn those things and practice them, even in the prison...if I can learn to put into practice those things, then I'm much more likely to be employable and much more likely to be able to feed my family. And certainly I'm much more likely to have the respect of my family. (Community Services sector staff, CS003, 1, June 15, 2011).

Many respondents believed in the importance of personal responsibility and autonomy, which when supported by staff, could lead prisoners to desist from crime and imagine a new life for themselves, for example,

it all came down to me, it all came down to my choice you know the choice of whether to keep doing the wrong thing and make that my life or the choice of whether to do the right thing and live like I am now. (Formerly incarcerated person, EP006, 1, August 18, 2011)

8.3.3 Benefits for the Community

Many participants felt that by providing prisoners with pro-social learning opportunities would have a positive impact on society as a whole, for example,

"Lower crime rates, increased opportunities for prisoners, for themselves and their families to achieve more within our community. But above all, I think lower recidivism rates and a more harmonious society" (Legal worker, LS01, 1, June 17, 2011).

8.3.4 Fostering Lifelong Change

Participants discussed a range of individual cases which demonstrated that when prisoners engage in valued learning they reduce their anti-social activity, both during the time that they engage in the activity and often long after the activity ends. These stories demonstrate the lifelong changes which people can make to their lives after engaging in valued learning opportunities. For example:

I got him a job...at a local manufacturer... A week after he started he came into my office and he put his arms around my neck and cried. He said, "This is the first time I've ever been able to provide for my family." (Community Services sector staff, CS003, 1, June 15, 2011) and,

"So, he's gone from being homeless, from being a drug offender to being employed, housed and healthy" (Community Services sector staff, CS003, 1, June 15, 2011) and,

She turned her life around, she worked on her anger issues, she got into the kitchen in there and the head kitchen person for the prison was so impressed by her work that he got her an apprenticeship when she got out. (Formerly incarcerated person, EP002, 1, June 6, 2011).

The enhancement of life chances and opportunities may not be tied solely to gaining employment, for example:

I don't think he's got a job, but you know what he does, everyday he's a volunteer at the local library... he hasn't reoffended, he's been off the booze and it's been about 4 years... He's a success because he hasn't gone back inside, he hasn't reoffended and he stayed off the booze. (Community Services sector staff, CS002, 1, June 14, 2011) and,

I had one guy in particular, he was habitual drunk driver, huge alcohol problem, like to the point where he would steal to get alcohol, really smart guy and he's at uni now doing psychology...he's doing really well.

(Community Corrections staff, CC009, 1, July 27, 2011) and,

"He really got his life on track, he got access to his kids back, had a place to live and wasn't drinking" (Community Corrections staff, CC007 & CC008, 1, July 27, 2011) and,

"She got off the drugs...she's got her driver's license and she is looking at doing a course next" (Community Corrections staff, CC010, 1, July 27, 2011).

8.3.5 Becoming a better citizen

The majority of participants perceived that valued learning opportunities, assisted and supported prisoners to become better citizens and therefore had significant benefits for the community, prisoners' families and prisoners themselves. For example,

they have gone on to be productive citizens, they've got jobs, houses, some of them are still with the transition services that we have hooked them up with in the beginning and they are getting continuous help. They are now in a place in society where they can contribute to it and they can be successful and not going back to the prison (Community Services sector staff, CS001, 1, April 29, 2011) and,

If you can sentence someone in a way that can assist them in becoming a contributing citizen, I would have thought that is a pretty positive sentence (Legal worker, LS002, 1, June 17, 2011).

Participants believed that valued learning opportunities provided an opportunity for people in prison to engage with the community and to feel a part of the community. Participants perceived this as being beneficial both for the community and for prisoners and led to a greater understanding and a reduction in stigma. For example, *'make prisoners feel like they were still part of the community and not somehow completely isolated from the community and ostracised'* (Member of Parliament, PL001, 1, August 19, 2011)

8.4 Discussion

Learning provides an opportunity for prisoners to turn a negative experience, that of exclusion from society and incarceration, into a positive experience, that which supports personal change and development (Hackman, 1997). The benefits of engaging in valued learning experiences for people in prison occur during and after the learning experience, thus having an impact on the quality of life within the prison environment and upon release into the community. Learning provides an opportunity for an improved lifestyle (Hackman, 1997). Engagement in education has the potential to create 'positive networks of learners promoting education and supporting others. Learners, peer mentors and staff gradually influence others and the prison culture through a 'ripple effect' (Prisoner Learning Alliance, 2016, p. 9).

Opportunities to engage in pro-social learning activities provide prisoners with a way to cope, in a constructive and mature manner, with the difficulties of prison life (Ubah & Robinson Jr., 2003; Prisoner Learning Alliance, 2016). People in prison access educational opportunities for a wide range of reasons and, where they are available, pursue a wide range of learning opportunities. Some prisoners focus on qualifications and work skills, whilst others pursue opportunities which focus on

prosocial activity and social interaction. ‘In the context of a prison, it is possible to consider education as a potential ‘break’ from overarching prison culture, a space in which the individual can interact with others as a learner as opposed to a prisoner’ (Szifris et. al, 2018, p. 6). Education and pro-social learning activities can provide a space where prisoners may be able to construct new narratives and explore alternate lifestyle choices in a safe space. Desisting from crime is not a simple linear process, it has been suggested that,

Desistance from offending may take a long time, with multiple twists and turns. Although it remains poorly understood, we can be confident that single interventions – whether an accredited programme, study, vocational training course or getting a job after release – are rarely enough. The web of influences involved in changing the offender’s self-image is complex. A mix of “generative” opportunities, motivations and networks usually need to combine before an individual stops offending. So, learning in prison ought to be one part of this pathway. Good experiences of learning, skills and employability are pro-social experiences. They involve individuals making progress alongside others. And they are likely to be more effective as part of a wider focus on goal orientation – what the individual would like to achieve and how he or she can be enabled to get there. (Scottish Government, 2009, p.15)

Findings indicate that stakeholders believe that pro-social learning should be supported by a reduction in social exclusion, particularly through encouraging contact with families and the wider community. “Given what we know about desistance, there is a strong case for encouraging more structured contact between offenders and their children in particular - for example, reading together, homework updates and computer use” (Scottish Government, 2009, p.17)

In addition, findings support the need for an ‘active’ prison which includes the involvement of prisoners actively engaging in designing programs which meet their individual needs (Scottish Government, 2009).

Schriro (2000) argues that the prison environment is too far removed from the real world and should instead be modelled as a ‘parallel universe’ more closely resembling the outside world “through work, community service, and citizenship” (n.p).

Findings from this research supports the proposition confirmed in the emerging theory of prison education in that,

Education can, under the right circumstances, and with careful facilitation by appropriate staff, cultivate an environment for the development of positive pro-social identities. When achieved, this promotes an identity that is focused on growth and development as opposed to preoccupied with survival (Szifris, et. al., 2018, p. 57)

By transforming the prison environment and culture, through a strategic focus on creating a pro-social environment and a range of pro-social activities and interactions, people in prison may be better supported to become responsible citizens during imprisonment and after release. Findings indicate that the benefits of pro-social learning include increased community safety, improved citizenship, reduced recidivism and greater chance of post release success.

8.5 Summary

The benefits of valued learning, not only suggest a reduction in recidivism, but also an improved prison environment and lifelong change for prisoners and their families. The potential to impact generations, not just individuals, and create

meaningful community change is central to the potential of valued learning. By meeting an individual where they are in their lives, providing them with choices and allowing them to explore their world in meaningful and individual ways can provide a powerful catalyst for personal development.

Chapter 9

Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this thesis was to explore the perceptions of prisoner learning in Tasmania from the viewpoints of a variety of stakeholders. By considering both formal and informal learning which occurs within the prison environment, the research questions looked at what learning was available and occurring, what learning was considered of value and the benefits that valued learning might bring to individuals, families and the wider community.

9.1 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include small sample size, lack of access to currently incarcerated persons and current TPS staff, the lack of refereed Tasmanian publications and the changing nature of the external environment influencing prison policy.

9.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research include the need for understanding the views of current staff and prisoners and how these stakeholder groups influence prison education policy. Further research is also needed to review the last decade's prisoner education policies, their results in terms of both recidivism and reduced offending, and to link these to the various governments' statements about the nature and purpose of prisoner education.

Further research into the influence of stakeholders and their perceptions of prisoner learning should be pursued. Whilst there are many stakeholders who play a role in the criminal justice system, very little research has been undertaken into how they can support better outcomes through pro-social informal learning in prison.

Whilst there is no 'theory of prisoner education' this research does find support for the emerging theory proposed by Szifris, et. al., (2018) which considers 'education as a possible 'hook' for change and a means for identity change; as a way of gaining skills and 'qualifications' that could serve to validate an emerging identity; and as a 'safe space' for prisoners to spend time in a positive, pro-social environment and develop a different social identity' (p 57-58). This research does find support for education being a way for prisoners to change

9.3 Conclusion

Tasmania is in an ideal location to showcase exceptional corrections practice given its small size, small prison populations and few locations. However, despite significant ongoing investment in tax payer dollars, the lack of leadership and the

inability to manage the required cultural change combines with an operational mindset which resists correctional best practice and human rights.

The withdrawal of state funding for training, coupled with the significant changes in the structure of the external education sector in Tasmania, may have continued to contribute to the absence of educational services for the majority of prisoners.

Historically, the Service has had inadequate performance management practices and has lacked the political support to implement disciplinary processes which ensure consequences for unprofessional conduct (Patterson, 1988; Scurrah, 2008). The Service has historically lacked rigorous staff training systems and has failed to focus on the need for social work competencies, rather than confinement and security competencies. These factors may well account for a uniformed staff who may lack either the skill or will to display the required interpersonal and social work skills to enable them to perform the duties required of a professional best practice corrections service. There has been evidence of a desire to change this approach since the '*Breaking the Cycle Strategy*' was implemented, however, the recent report by the Office of the Custodial Inspector Tasmania (2017) highlights issues such as the increase in prisoner numbers, overcrowding, building which are not fit for purpose and stretched services which negatively impacts on pro-social learning opportunities and health services for prisoners and staff morale.

It is possible that with the rise of the RNR model, an increased focus on the medicalisation of prisoners and the development of a more criminogenic focus, resources were diverted from broader education and training to the development of criminogenic programs and professional staff from social welfare and therapeutic

backgrounds. It is possible that this stretching of resources has resulted in fewer prisoners to be able to engage in formal education whilst incarcerated.

In order to create the impetus for change, the community as a whole must work to ensure that the role of the Service is one “that is concerned with the human rights and dignity of the prisoner, a belief in their capacity to grow and a desire to play an active part in this process” (Cianchi, 2009, p. 69). To label this as ‘unrealistic’, only serves to highlight the absence of will and resolve (Bauman, 2005). O’Brien (2010) states that “Leadership is needed among policymakers and practitioners in building a public conversation about prisons as a core public service that serves us all, not just the victims and perpetrators of crime” (p. 17). This conversation was commenced with the *‘Breaking the Cycle Strategy’*, however, despite bipartisan support the conversation has not been continued.

As a community we are paying for the prison system, therefore, we have a right and a responsibility to do all we can to make it effective and ensure that those incarcerated within it have every chance to lead a responsible, productive life, both inside and upon release (Shelton, 2007). It should be remembered that “society has a stake in how offenders respond to punishment, and therefore punishments should promote desirable responses” (Rex, 2004, p. 148). Without a focus on human rights and the promotion and accessibility to pro-social activities the community may not see the desirable responses.

Prisons which empower people to take responsibility for their actions, which support democratic processes and choice, which encourage personal growth and development by providing a wide range of pro-social learning opportunities and support to prisoners during and after release are viewed by respondents as being more likely to reduce recidivism and improve prisoners’ life chances.

There needs to be a wider range of formal and informal learning opportunities, tailored to individuals needs and desires, made available to people in prison. This will support both intentional pro social learning and unexpected learning and create a ‘ripple effect’ within the social environment of the prison. Prisoners need to be supported by staff with the skills and inclination to motivate and engage prisoners in pro social learning and be provided with the resources to engage in that learning. Individualised learning plans should be developed on entry to prison, regardless of length of stay. They should be developed in partnership with the learner and not only focussed on assessments of criminogenic need but rather engage with the persons interests and motivations to learn. By moving away from external parties undertaking research into job prospects and providing stereotypical learning solutions, for example construction for men and beauty for women, engaging with prisoners on an individual level to determine their self-directed and autonomous desires for learning, greater benefits and greater participation in true adult learning can take place.

By creating a prison where people are busily engaged in pro social pursuits which interest them, it may be possible to enhance the social environment, thereby reducing the pains of imprisonment and the need for anti-social survival skills. In turn this would reduce the time, and potentially the inclination, for people in prison to learn anti-social skills. Findings indicate that there is significant support for prison management to look at ways of engaging with the community and including the community in prison activities and ensuring people in prison have access to the community. This may assist with reintegration, reduce the issue of stigma and open opportunities for restoration.

Overall respondents desire a prison service which focusses on the basic principles which are outlined in Prisons of the Future (Joldersma, 2016) as being:

1. Human dignity

Human dignity is related to respect and being of value. The prisoner or offender feels recognized as a person.

2. The avoidance of further damage or harm

The prison and alternatives to detention are a punishment in itself. They should not provide additional punishments or harms.

3. The right to develop the self

Persons should have the possibility to learn, be active and productive. They should be enabled to use their strengths. They should be treated as having personal autonomy, that is, being enabled to make own decisions.

4. The right to be important to other people

Persons should not be isolated, but should be able to contact their social network. They should be enabled to be recognized by others and to belong to a functioning society, including opportunities for work, restoration, and repair.

5. A stable and professional organization

A stable organization implies a stable and professional staff group, which strives continually for 'whole system integrity' and 'professional development' (through research, evaluation, and reflexivity). Prison and probation service should be open minded to new knowledge and taking risks. The organization is able to react flexibly and acts in a turbulent environment without convulsion. The professionals communicate transparently to society and citizens (p. 147).

At this point in time, stakeholders are not convinced that this is achievable under current arrangements in Tasmania. This may be due to the lack of focus in current legislation in regards to upholding our commitments to international law and

national standards. The recent appointment of independent oversight of prison practices in the state may enhance current arrangements, if appropriately resourced, and allow for greater transparency. Greater oversight and transparency is required from both the Government and Tasmania Prison Service to inform stakeholders in detail on targets and progress, for example, on the '*Breaking the Cycle*' strategy. A systematic approach to removing barriers to learning needs to be undertaken by the Tasmanian Prison Service, possibly using a risk management framework.

Documentary data highlights that initial investigations of the barriers have been compiled, but follow up work is required to remove these barriers. In addition, further research could be undertaken using a similar format to Liebling (2004) to analyse the values and quality of the Tasmanian Prison System.

Respondents believe that the skills required to survive the current prison regime inhibit the ability of prisoners to lead pro-social lives on release. The current system of 'corrections' in Tasmania has failed and continues to fail. Calls for organisational change and strategies which purport to 'break the cycle' are viewed more as public relations solutions by stakeholders who feel that the resources to support such drastic change have not been provided. Security issues consume the ever-shrinking budget, reports are commissioned, new staff are engaged, and the daily costs of incarceration continue to spiral out of control and yet the poor results and the revolving door continues. Previous research (Scurrah, 2008) suggests that historically senior managers have continued to speak in vision statements, whilst frontline staff and prisoners speak of a reality far removed. Findings from this research show that respondents highlighted the shortcomings of the Service to deliver on the '*Breaking the Cycle Strategy*'. Small pilot programs abound, evaluative research may sometimes be conducted, yet without the strategic integration and alignment of a variety of

policies and processes, the cycle of failure continues. Calls for independent review and oversight have historically been ignored by successive governments, however, in 2017 an independent prison inspectorate was appointed in Tasmania. It is hoped that, by working with stakeholders to better understand the complexity of issues, access to valued learning opportunities may be enhanced.

A strategy to enhance prisoner learning within Tasmania would need to focus on the following key areas:

- Assess all prisoners within the first week of entering prison for their health and education needs and, in partnership with them, develop a plan to meet those needs
- Ensure sufficient staff, with an appropriate skill set, to assist prisoners to engage in pro-social learning opportunities
- Provide the health and education services which are required to meet the needs of current prisoners
- Allow remandees and prisoners sentenced to less than six months to participate in programs and education
- Allow officers to lead and participate in the provision of pro-social activities
- Using a risk management approach explore, in partnership with staff and prisoners, ways in which barriers to pro-social learning can be reduced
- Develop partnerships with a wide variety of external community groups, businesses and other stakeholders to deliver an extensive range of pro-social learning activities

- Develop staff training which focusses on a human rights approach to prison management, supports the delivery of care in a prison environment and enhances staff relationships to support prisoner motivation to participate in pro-social activities

This requires support from the community and bi-partisan support from political parties, much of this initial work was done during the process of developing the *Breaking the Cycle Strategy*. The development of projects central to stakeholder engagement and the delivery of pro-social activities should be a high priority for the Tasmanian Prison Service, particularly as the prison estate continues to grow substantially. There is a risk that with this rapid growth, staff numbers and services will be inadequate to meet the basic needs of prisoners. In recent times there has been a significant increase in the frequency and length of lock downs, largely due to a lack of staff. This has resulted in the failure of the Tasmanian Prison Service to deliver drug treatment programs, health services and education to the vast majority of prisoners in a timely and professional manner. Significant funding has been provided to build new prisons, however, if they are to serve their purpose and make the community safer, prisoners need to be provided the services to enable them to live a crime free life on release.

Despite all of the negatives and all of the barriers, there are success stories, there are staff and service providers who are determined to work in better ways, there are prisoners who desist and turn their lives around. Desistance from crime does occur and there are moments of meaningful personal change which result in people leading pro social lives. It is through the determination of individuals that change occurs.

Indeed, ‘people don’t change – they are change. ‘Desistance’ is a journey, not a ‘road to Damascus’ conversion. It does involve deliberate choice, it needs the support of unconditional positive regard’ (Robertson, 2013, p. 277). It is that support which people need, to be seen as someone other than just an offender, to be provided with the opportunities to engage, as autonomous self-directed adult learners, in pro social activities and be involved in the community. In order to reduce recidivism and create a safer community, organisational systems must support the provision of pro-social learning and must understand the important impact of daily interactions, the upholding of human rights and social climate.

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Figures

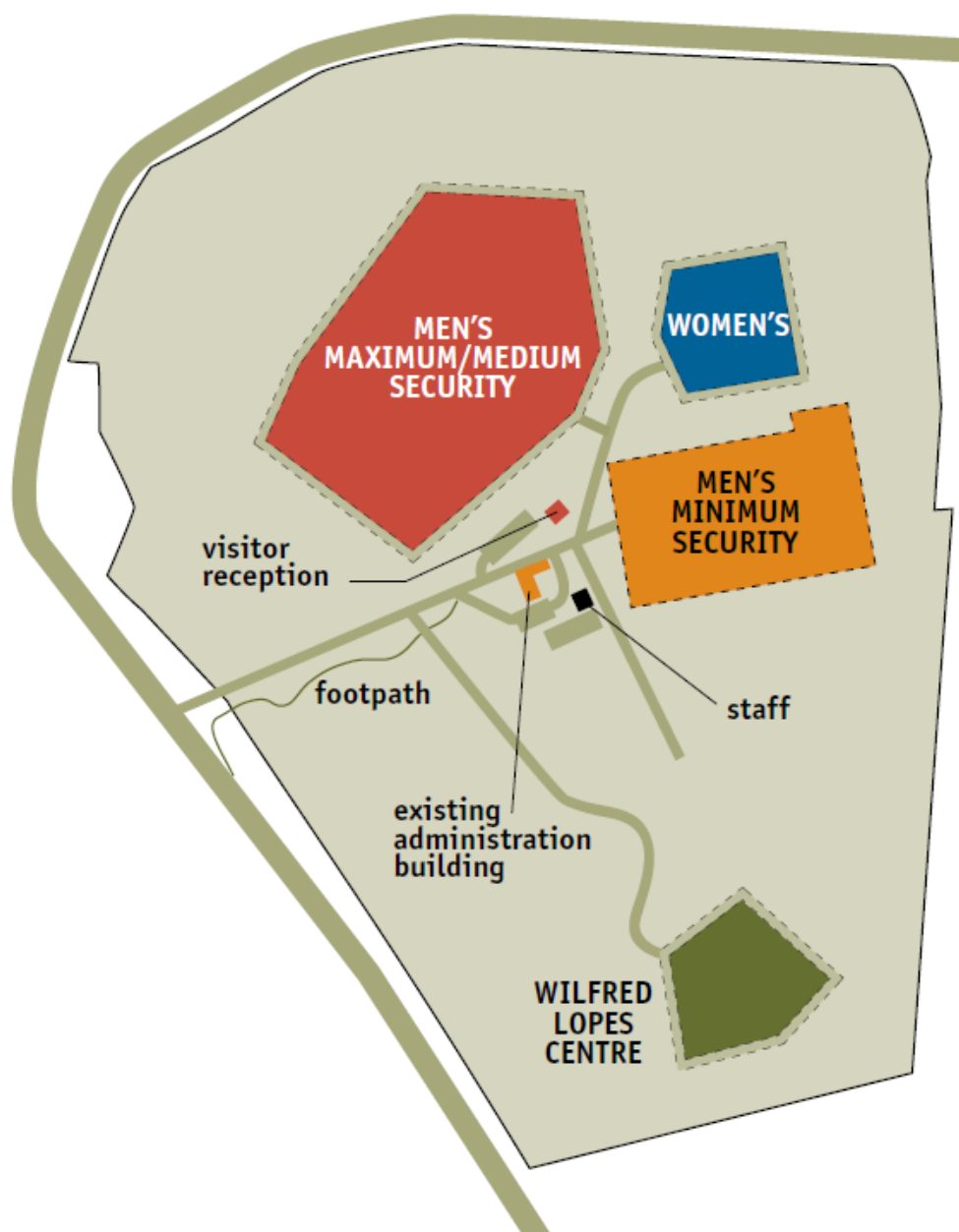


Figure 3.1. Map of the Risdon site (PIRP Newsletter, 2009).

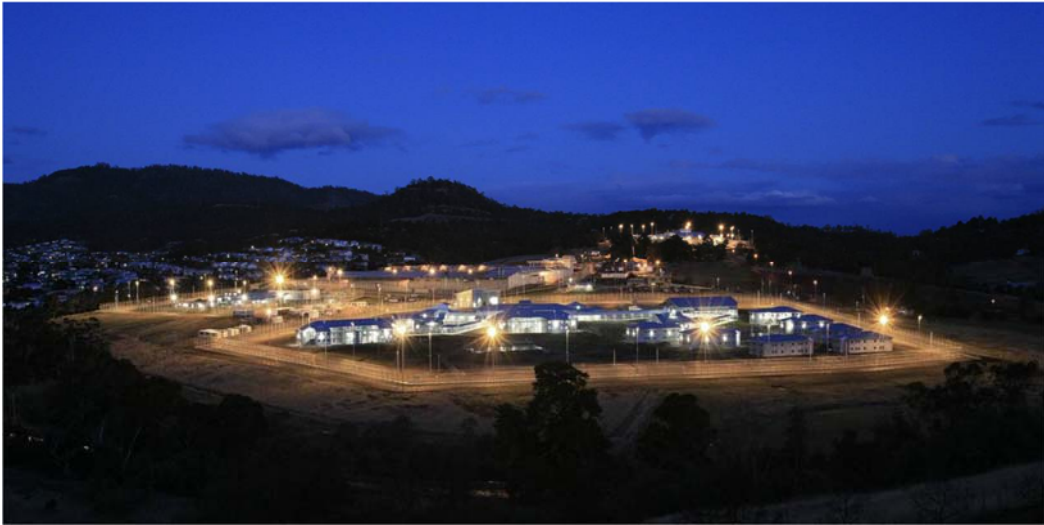


Figure 3.2. Risdon prison complex at night (McCafferty, 2009).

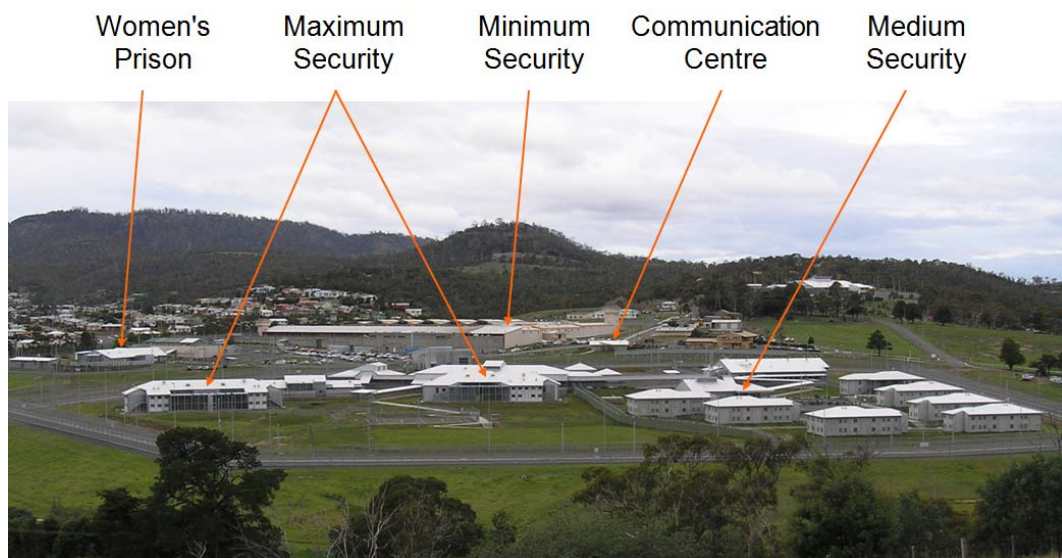


Figure 3.3. Risdon prison complex site layout (Koudstaal, Cianchi, Knott, & Koudstaal, 2009).



Figure 3.4. Ron Barwick prison LINC (Koudstaal, Cianchi, Knott, Koudstaal, 2009).